



## Hebrews 4:1-11 Come and Rest

Summary: God is calling us into His rest, but we must be diligent to enter it by faith and fear the kind of disobedience that would keep us from it.

I want to start this morning by making an assumption. That's risky, I know, but I feel pretty confident in this. I want to start by assuming you've got some stuff going on in your life, some tension, some frustration, some doubts or concerns about the future, a heart made heavy by something that is broken and you could use some rest. Your issue might be due to something inside of you, or it might be a struggle someone close to you is going through and you feel the weight of concern for them. Maybe it's a struggle *with* someone close to you.

It might be concerns about school, work, or the way the world is headed. I'm pretty sure that covers most of us. And if it's not a good description of you today, maybe it was you last week, or maybe it's going to be you *next* week.

The point is, we all have things to deal with in life: challenges, trials, disappointments, frustrations, obstacles, doubts, fears, temptations. And so, if you walked in here with a heavy heart this morning in need of rest, you're not alone. And, you're not broken. You're not weak or unusual. You might not even be doing things wrong. You're normal. Jesus said [in this world you will trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world \(John 16:33\)](#).

You need to understand both sides of that statement: [in the world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world](#). God knows your life is full of difficulty and sin and trials and temptations, it's full of injuries and illnesses and injustice, there are things you do that are wrong and things that are wrongfully done to you. [In the world, you have trouble](#).

But God knows. And He cares. He wants to meet you in the middle of it all and offer you comfort, healing, forgiveness, peace, and rest – He wants you [to take heart, because He has overcome the world](#). In other words, He wants to meet with you today. Here and now. Before you get things cleaned up. Before you get your life put back together. Before all the stuff you're worried about is dealt with, wrapped up, and fades away. Right here, right now, in the middle of your troubles, the Lord wants to meet with you and make a difference.

And so, I want to begin by blessing you this morning with truth. You've heard a lot of things this week, listened to a lot of things, read a lot of things, watched a lot of things, seen a lot of things, felt a lot of things, you've said a lot of things to yourself.

Now I want to take some time to speak truth to you from the Word of God, to fill your ears, your mind, your heart with what God has said and trust that that it will encourage you,

comfort you, strengthen you, and give you the guidance and assurance you need. In case you didn't know, or it's just been a while since you heard and maybe you've forgotten I want to tell you:

**Psalm 29:11** The LORD will give strength to His people;  
The LORD will bless His people with peace.

Let those words fall on you like drops of rain.

Jesus said:

**Matthew 11:28** Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. 30 For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.

He told His disciples:

**John 14:27** Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

**John 15:9** As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

And because of this Christians are told

**Philippians 1:6...** He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

**Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**Galatians 5:22** ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Why do I bring all of this up? Because we need to know it. We need to be reminded of it. We need to know who God is and what He is doing *so that we can trust Him*. So that we can obey Him. So that we can look at our lives and the world we live in and still find rest.

We're working our way through the book of Hebrews together and you may remember what we've been seeing over the past several weeks – that Jesus is better than Moses which is good news, but also potentially problematic because people tend to have a history of following their own ideas instead of trusting God and His leaders.

That happened back in the days of Moses. The nation of Israel was enslaved in the land of Egypt, they were servants to Pharaoh when God appeared to Moses and told him to go tell Pharaoh to set the people free. Pharaoh didn't like that idea and wouldn't go along with it, so God sent plagues and problems on the nation until finally he relented, but then, as the people of Israel were on their way out, he had a change of heart and tried to bring them back. That's when God parted the Red Sea, the people of Israel crossed over on dry ground and God let the waters come rushing back in and drowned the Egyptian army that was pursuing them.

Then, God met with the people at Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law, the instruction on how they should live and worship as God's special people, and He told them that He was going to lead them to the Promised Land, a place where there would be no pharaoh to rule over them, a place where they could live in peace under His leadership instead.

And so they went, and they got to the border of the land of Canaan, what we call modern Israel, and they sent in some spies to check the place out. Ten of them came back and said, 'Yeah, it looks like a great place to live, lots of good farm land, lots of good pastures for the animals, seems like some great neighborhoods, but the people who live around here are enormous, they seem like giants and we feel like grasshoppers by comparison, they'll crush us and our children. This just isn't going to work; we better find somewhere else.'

But two of the men said, 'All of that's true, we don't deny any of it. But, this is the way God said to go,' and they tried to get the people to remember all the great things God *had* done for them recently and encouraged them to trust Him to *keep* doing great things in the future.

Unfortunately, as we mentioned last week, the majority ruled and the people did not enter the Promised Land, but instead they wandered in the desert living out of their backpacks and wagons for the next 40 years. They did not receive the good things God wanted to give them; they did not see the good things He wanted to do for them.

And now, fast forward over 1300 years, and the author of Hebrews is telling Christians: you need to know that. You need to know that history. You need to understand that *people who knew God*, people who saw miracles, people who heard the voice of God, saw the Ten Commandments engraved on stone tablets, people who ate roasted lamb and pita bread with Moses *missed out on what God really wanted to do*.

And while Jesus is better than Moses, that doesn't automatically mean we're better than the people of Israel. In fact, you and I today still struggle to follow God through Jesus today just like the people struggled to follow God through Moses so many centuries ago.

Which is why we're being warned, cautioned, exhorted, encouraged, to guard our hearts and faithfully, persistently, follow Jesus today. We're warned not to miss out on what God wants to do for us, with us, in us and through us, like the Israelites missed out, especially since Jesus is so much better than Moses.

Read with me here in Hebrews chapter 4 as we see the comparison and warning continue:

**Hebrews 4:1** 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, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

God brought good news of deliverance, salvation, and hope to the people of Israel who were following Moses, they heard it, but they didn't fully believe it. This is why we need to hear and believe God's promises for us and follow Him obediently as He leads us to rest.

3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

"So I swore in My wrath,  
"They shall not enter My rest,"

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 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."

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."

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.

Now, this is a very complex and wordy passage of Scripture, but here's what it is saying.

God makes an offer of rest to His people. It's what our life was meant to be. In the book of Genesis you get a description of the creation of the world and for six days it follows a set

pattern it says on the first day God did this, and it was morning and evening the first day. On the second day, God did this and it was morning and evening the second day. And on and on it goes. But then you get to the seventh day and everything has been made, stars and planets, starfish and people. And it says God rested. This is where we get the idea of a Sabbath, that one day out of every seven we should rest before starting another week of work and study.

Adam and Eve were supposed to live in the Garden, enjoy the creation and experience rest with God. God wanted them to be close to Him, but they chose to follow their own path, assert their own ideas about the best way to do things, and they were cast out of the Garden as a result.

Then, God wanted the people of Israel to be close to Him, so He led them to the Promised Land where they could be free from outside political rule, they could be led by God and worship freely, but they wouldn't enter in. They had their own ideas about the best ways to do things, and so they missed out. Forty years later God gave them another chance and they did enter in, under the leadership of Joshua.

And there were some good seasons, some good moments, when they chose to prioritize their relationship with God, to follow His leadership and guidance, to live for Him instead of living for themselves. But these never lasted too long. The history of Israel during that period is filled with cycles of rebellion followed by repentance as the people vacillated between following their own ideas and desire and following God. And so, the even in the Promised Land, *even in the place God gave them to live a good life*, they needed to be encouraged to follow God, serve God, trust God, and not allow their hearts to grow hard and cold through disbelief and discouragement.

So, the message, all throughout human history is: God offers us rest, God wants to do good things in us, with us, through us, and for us. But we keep resisting and rejecting Him. We need to be told, time and time again:

["Today, if you will hear His voice,  
Do not harden your hearts."](#)

We need to be told

[Hebrews 4:1](#) Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

We need to be told:

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

Today God offers us rest, but note: it's HIS rest. He's offering us the opportunity to come closer to Him. He's offering to come into our lives. He's offering to give us strength and gifts

of the Holy Spirit. He's offering to give us wisdom, guidance, direction, discernment. He's offering us peace, and joy, and comfort. He's offering us a peace that passes all understanding and the strength to stand and fight and resist the evil we find in the world and in our own hearts and minds. He offers to equip us with spiritual armor and train us to stand in the face of both physical and spiritual evil. And, He offers us a place to lay down our weapons and find rest. He offers us all of this and more.

But again, it's His rest. It's a rest that is found with Him and in Him. It's a rest that comes from saying I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. It's a rest that comes from trusting that God is still in control no matter what the headlines say, or what legislation is passed, or who is elected to what. No matter who asks me out on a date or who doesn't ask me out. No matter who returns my calls or texts. No matter what the test results say when they finally come back. No matter how many emails I get. No matter how tall the giants are, I'm going to rest in God because I know He loves me.

Now, I might wish that God would just fight the giants for me. And look, you know what? Sometimes He does. Sometimes the Lord fights your battles for you; other times He fights them through you. *But you never, ever, have to fight them alone.* The call is always to come to God, trust in God, and rest in God. The warning is always: beware of the temptation to go it alone, to do it yourself, to chase down your own ideas.

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

The call for you and me this morning is a call to diligent faith. A call to hear God, know God, and trust God...even in this. It's a call to look at our current circumstances, stare them right in the face, see and appreciate the gigantic size of our fears, frustrations, and failures, look them up and down from head to toe and say, 'I'm going to trust God, even in this. I'm going to ask God for help to face this. I'm going to ask God to fight this for me or through me, and I am going to rest in Him and trust in Him.'

'I'm not going to do it alone. I'm not going to think it's all on me to get through this, to get past this, to resist this, to change this, to win this, *it's not all on me.* I'm going to invite God in, I'm going to ask for the victory He wants me to have, the way He wants me to have it, because I'm seeking His rest. I'm seeking His presence. I'm seeking the good things that He wants to give, even in a land and life that is surrounded by enemies *because I trust God.*'

'I see what He *has* done for me, what He *is* doing for me, what He has *promised* to me, and I don't want my disobedience or disbelief to be the thing that keeps me from His blessing. And so, I'm going to be intentional, I'm going to be diligent, I'm going to be afraid of coming short, and I'm going to press back into a God that is already reaching out to me. A God who says:'

**Psalm 29:11 The LORD will give strength to His people;  
The LORD will bless His people with peace.**

**Matthew 11:28** Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. 30 For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

**John 14:27** Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

**John 15:9** As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

And because all of these things are true, I know

**Philippians 1:6**... He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

And so I will try to

**Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**Galatians 5:22** ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Let's pray.

*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

- Rom 15:13



## Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

### Hebrews 4:1-11 Come and Rest

Summary: God is calling us into His rest, but we must be diligent to enter it by faith and fear the kind of disobedience that would keep us from it.<sup>1</sup>

- What are some areas of life where you would like to experience God's rest?
  - What about this situation makes rest difficult to receive/experience/sustain?
- Why is it important to understand both sides of Jesus's statement: [in this world you will trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world \(John 16:33\)](#)
- How has knowing what God has said or promised about an issue helped you rest?
- Reflect on the following verses. How do they lead you to rest?
  - [Psalm 29:11](#) The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.
  - [Matthew 11:28](#) Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. 30 For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."
  - [John 14:27](#) Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
  - [John 15:9](#) As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.
  - [Philippians 4:6](#) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- According to Hebrews 4:11 we should be diligent to enter God's rest. What does that look like for you? Why is it so hard to find and maintain rest?
- According to the same verse, we should learn from the disobedience of the Israelites who followed Moses. When have you learned from the failures or pain of others? What have you seen that kept you from similar choices?

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<sup>1</sup> Rest here is best understood as a life of faith and obedience in which a person turns away from a wandering way of life and embraces the proclaimed Word of God; it is entered today by believing and consummated at the end of the age. "Scholars have spilled much ink in attempting to discern what the author of Hebrews means by the 'rest' into which one may enter." (Commentary on NT use of the OT, Carson et al.)