

# Jesus is the Better Sabbath

Through faith in Jesus Christ, the promise of God's rest can be experienced in the present, and secured for our eternal future.

*Hebrews 3:16-4:11*

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## ANNOUNCE

Second Sunday

Women's Conference video

## RECAP

Last week we looked at the comparison offered between the Hebrew Hero, Moses, and the Savior of the World, Jesus.

- Jesus is better than Moses in that He was FAITHFUL where Moses FAILED.
- Moses was part of God's BUILDING, Jesus was the BUILDER.

Through Moses, and subsequently Joshua, God was offering His people entrance into His permanent rest and promises. But the failure of God's people to enter into His rest stemmed from their unbelief and hardness of heart.

We have been outlining the dangers of unbelief:

- The wilderness wanderers, after being delivered from Egypt, were moving towards the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham.
- During that process, they constantly lost focus of God. They constantly went astray in their hearts.

- ***Their journey was marked with doubt, fear, complaining, idolatry, rebellion, and discontentment.***
- When they finally reached the threshold of finding rest and peace in the land God promised them, they fell short of experiencing it due to their lack of faith and hardness of heart which built up over a long period of complaining against God.
- Only 2 men of an entire generation of people inherited God's promise, and that is not what God intended!

Paul continues to belabor the point by asking a series of questions:

### BIBLE VERSE

**[Jhn 5:45-47 NKJV] 45 “Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is [one] who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. 46 “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 “But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”**

### BIBLE VERSE

**Heb 3:16-19 NKJV – 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.**

### INSIGHT

Verse 19 tells us that the ultimate category of sin that kept them from the promised land was unbelief, but notice in the three previous verses he outlines the three characteristics and patterns of unbelief.

- You see, unbelief is not merely a lack of confession, and belief is not merely the presence of confession. Someone can say they believe in Jesus and be walking in unbelief. True faith is not measured solely by the words that come out of your mouth, but by the reality of your life with Christ.

### **1.) Rebellion (Verse 16) – 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?**

- The rebellion reared its ugly head more than once. The people rebelled against God while Moses was on the mountain receiving the 10 commandments by building an idol of a golden calve and worshipping it.
- *The most famous rebellion was the rebellion of Korah. Korah convinced the people that Moses was a bad leader and that the Levites were not uniquely qualified to serve. In his quest for authority and power, he caused nearly 15,000 people to die because of God's righteous anger against them.*
- Unbelief is frequently displayed in the desire to kick against God's authority in your life. You know what's right, but you refuse it. YOu understand what the Bible says, but you would rather have your own way.

### **2.) Sin (Verse 17) – 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?**

- Multiple times the children of Israel sinned in ways that brought death into their camp.
  - They sinned through rebellion.
  - They sinned through complaining against Moses and God, and serpents came and struck many of them down.
  - Walking in continual sin is another sign that unbelief has set in.

### **3.) Disobedience (Verse 18) – 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?**

- Don't ever forget those piercing words of Jesus, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, but do not do the things I command?"
- Disobedience and defiance is an act of unbelief that God is actually there and will hold one accountable for their actions and words.

These things in life reflect a heart that is on a path toward unbelief.

He continues from this train of thought into chapter four with a modern-day application for his listeners.

**BIBLE VERSE**

**Heb 4:1-11 NKJV – 1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.**

**ILLUSTRATION**

**EXAMPLE: Cahlan falling asleep on command while I was putting him to bed.**

I'm jealous of those who seem to have the ability to enter into rest anytime they want; they close their eyes and fall asleep.

Well, Hebrews 4 speaks to us of a spiritual and eternal rest that is also available to the human soul, and it instructs us on how we can experience and enter into that rest that God offers. Moses couldn't get God's people into it. Joshua couldn't keep God's people in it, but Jesus both leads us into and keeps us in the REST of God.

**THE POINT**

This chapter, in short details that God's rest is still available, but can only be accessed through faith.

What is the REST OF GOD?

- This chapter has sparked much debate in theological circles because of the various tenses used in the description of entering God's rest.
- He uses three tenses:
  - Aorist tense – the rest of God is something that we must continually enter into, day by day.
  - Present tense – The rest of God is something we can experience right now.
  - Future tense – the rest of God is something that yet awaits us.

The only logical way to define the rest of God is that it is both present and future. As we will see by the end of the chapter, we can define God's rest as:

**QUOTE**

# *The “rest of God” implies entrance to God’s promises now and residence in God’s presence eternally.*

Josh, Definition

## ILLUSTRATION

Bobby Fitzpatrick was a dear brother in the church I pastored in NorCal. Bobby come out of a rough past but was radically met by the grace of Jesus. He was baptized right here before Easter.

Bobby, died of cancer. I still remember the conversation I had with him a few days before he died. He came to church and sat in his wheelchair. I watched him lift his w=hands in worship with a big smile on his face. After a life of turmoil, Bobby experienced the rest of God. Even though his body was dying, his spirit was at peace with God. Now, he is experiencing the second phase of that rest. One day we will see him again and experience the fullness of God’s rest together.

That’s the thing about the rest that God offers:

You can be dying and find rest.

You can be broken and find rest.

You can in the middle of the greatest trial and difficulty you’ve ever known and at the same time experience God’s rest!

## INTRO

God designed humanity to be at rest in every way.

- Rest implies peace, a lack of struggle, and tranquility; this was how it was in the Garden of Eden before sin entered into the world.

WORK IS NOT A CONCEPT THAT ENTERED AT THE FALL... ADAM AND EVE WORKED BEFORE SIN, BUT THEIR WORK WAS LIFE-GIVING, NOT DRAINING. What drains us is the fact that we work, but now we are battling our sinful nature and a world that is full of sin. Work will continue into eternity in the kingdom.

- After sin, rest in God's design was replaced with obligatory toil that brought turmoil and difficulty into the human experience.
  - The woman would work to bear children, and the man would work to squeeze out a living. They would both work to survive. Maintaining family would be work, keeping the marriage healthy would be work, and trying to find any way back to God would work... a job that would be impossible to accomplish no matter how hard one tried.
- Humanity is tired. You know people are tired in life when they start calling death, "resting in peace!"
- We've all experienced the exhaustion of life.

## SABBATH

God wanted, even after the fall, to leave a remnant of His intended rest. He wanted His people to have a reminder, once a week, of what God intended for them and what God was going to be moving people back towards; His rest.

- God established the precedent of His rest on the 7th day after creation. God didn't rest because he was tired, but because he was finished. It was a rest of completion, perfection, and satisfaction in His perfect order.
- Later, because mankind had left that rest, he established it as part of His divine law, the 10 commandments. When the law came around, part of that law included the observance of a day called: **THE SABBATH**. A day where the Jews would cease from their work and be reminded that God's original intention for humanity was for them to experience rest, just as God himself rested after six days in creating the universe.

## BIBLE VERSE

**[Exo 20:8-11 NKJV] 8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."**

## APPLICATION

SABBATH: The Sabbath and the laws surrounding it are interesting subjects to study. After all, out of the ten commandments, this is the only one that we have ceased to practice and uphold as Christians... or is it?

- Is it that because Christ abolished the requirements of the Jewish law at the cross, that the Sabbath no longer matters to Him? Well, seeing that God never changes, I don't think that's the case. We must still enter into God's Sabbath rest, but here's the amazing thing that the Bible teaches us:
- The original Sabbath was designed to be an invitation to worship, rejuvenation, and enjoyment of God. Under the tyranny of the Pharisees, it became 39 classes of countless rules that had to be followed.
- When Jesus and His disciples plucked some heads of grain on the sabbath, the Pharisees had a conniption. They broke three rules: walked more than 1999 paces, plucked which was harvesting, and rubbed the wheat in their fingers which equaled threshing. The rabbinic teachings and traditions had mutilated the sabbath. Jesus said...

**[Mar 2:27-28 NKJV] 27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 "Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."**

#### QUOTE

*The Sabbath Day was foreshadowing the permanent rest of God that would be restored to humanity through faith in the finished work of Jesus.*

Josh, Quote

#### JESUS IS GOD'S REST

Remember that very comforting statement that Jesus made?

**Mat 11:28-30 NKJV – 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."**

**ILLUSTRATION**

Here is an experiment. I'm going to say a word, and you tell me the first thing that comes to mind:

- **Hershey's = Chocolate**
- **Superbowl = Football**
- **Mickey Mouse = Disney**
- **Rest = ??? (vacation, Sunday afternoon nap, hammock)**

Well, the association for the Jewish mind wouldn't go to a hundred different places.

- When the Jew heard the word rest, what is the first thing they would think of? **SABBATH**.  
Sabbath = rest.
- When they heard Jesus, they heard Jesus say, "Come to me if your soul is weary, and I will give you Sabbath. Not a day, but a permanent reality."

Verse 1 opens by way of a chilling warning... the rest of God is available, but to fall short of entering into His rest is something to be taken seriously.

**BIBLE VERSE**

**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** (*apparently HEARING the offer of God's rest and HEADING it by faith are two different things.*).

**1****God's rest requires faith****QUOTE**

*"Faith brings into the present the reality of that which is future, unseen, or heavenly."*

Andrew Lincoln, Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology

**APPLICATION**



It takes faith to rest.

**EXAMPLE:** I don't like to let go of things. I'm the type of guy that doesn't love the process. I updated my computer last night and even though it said 1 hour, I checked it every 10 minutes to see if there was something I needed to do.

That doesn't work well with God...

- When we take matters into our own hands, it says that we don't trust the Lord with it.
- Sadly, when we refuse to rest in the Lord and have faith that His ways are best, we exhaust ourselves into a corner.
  - **EXAMPLES:** You can't stand being alone, so you force a relationship that God isn't in.
  - You are frustrated by your lot in life, so you try to force a different life at the expense of your relationship with God, your character, or your integrity.
  - You know there's a blessing beyond that step of obedience, but fear, selfishness, or your fleshly desires keep you from trusting God.

## **APPLICATION**

Again, **HEARING** the truth and **HEADING** the truth are two very different things.

- How was the gospel (good news) preached to the Israelites? Go in and possess the land. Believe in God's promise of victory and blessing. Put faith on your feet and go into what God promised.
- Yet, there was no **MINGLING** of faith and truth. to know the truth without actively trusting the truth causes one to fall short of what God has for them.
- The children of Israel lived their short lives in fear, never experiencing true victory, and always settling for second best.

How many people who say that they follow Jesus today settle for a life of defeat, constant discouragement, and never entering into God's best for their lives because they are afraid to trust Him. They don't want to take a step of faith. They don't want to rejoice in trials. They don't want to risk uncertainty to be obedient. They don't want to give up sin. They hear the truth every week, are convicted by the Word of God, are exhorted by other believers, but they never mix what they hear with what they do.

- God's truth is always the truth, whether you believe it or not, but God's truth will not convert into blessings if it is not obeyed.

## APPLICATION

You and I will never truly find rest in Christ if our faith is misdirected or our identity is in the wrong stuff.

- Maybe your faith and identity are in the stuff you own, your material life. You'll finally have rest when you get that house, that car, that bank account. That causes you to weary yourself in pursuing all the wrong stuff.
- Maybe your faith and identity are in something you want to achieve: If I can just get that position, that status, that recognition, I'll be at rest.
- Maybe your faith and identity are in someone you want to be: I just need this relationship, this image, and this lifestyle then I'll be at rest.

## QUOTE

*“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.”*

Saint Augustine,

## 2

## God's rest requires immediate action

### BIBLE VERSE

**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,**

**BIBLE VERSE**

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.”

**TODAY**

Here, the author again quotes Psalm 95, giving its deeper context and meaning.

God’s rest has been established from the completion of the world He worked to create.

- **He rested on the seventh day** – God’s creation was perfect, as it should be and everything was at rest. The 7th day was a perfect picture of everything God wanted for humanity. If humanity could have hit the pause button of the seventh day, we would all be living in paradise, heaven, and a perfect world where everything was always right, always at peace, and we would always be enjoying the “rest” of God.
- But we blew it, so God said, **“My rest still exists, and I will issue an invitation for people to enter into it.”**
- His first invitation was to the people He chose, Israel.
- I believe that if the Israelites would have been faithful throughout the desert wandering and would have entered across the Jordan by faith, God would have given them that land and established His perfect rule and reign from there, giving His nation peace and rest from their enemies, from their wanderings, and from the difficulties.
- They didn’t so hundreds of years later, King David writes, **“Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”** Apparently, there was going to be a day when God would once again invite people into His rest.
- But now, it would be an invitation to all people through the mediator of His rest, Jesus Christ.

**BIBLE VERSE**

[2Co 6:2 NKJV] **2 For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.**

**TODAY**

So today, is not just right now, this day. TODAY is a season of time when God is inviting humanity to receive His promised rest.

- The Bible says that there is coming a **“day of judgment, a day of the Lord.”** That is the future season where the invitation is over and God will then judge the world based on their response to that invitation.
- But TODAY is the day of salvation! Today is the day where you and I by faith can experience the rest of God.

### 3

## God's rest requires ceasing from our own works

### BIBLE VERSE

**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.**

### CONTEXT

Joshua eventually led the next generation across the border, but by that time it was too late. They only were able to experience part of the promise. Which means the promise is still available today in Christ. But notice the QUALITY of the rest of God:

Note: in verse 9, the author inserts a play on words which lets us know that he is not merely talking about rest, but a certain kind of rest that's was familiar to the Jews.

- In every other verse where he mentions rest, he uses the common Greek word that means, “To calm the winds: Find peace in a storm.”
- In verse 9, talking about the rest that remains for God's people, he uses the Greek word, “Sabbatismos” which means... SABBATH.
- The true Sabbath, the one where we would find a rest from all our fleshly works done through our own effort that all fell short of the glory of God, is found in Jesus, the better Sabbath.

## 10 He who enters His rest ceases from His works as God did.

- The seventh day God rested from His creative work.
- After the work of the cross, Jesus declared, “It is finished” and SAT at the right hand of the father showing that the work of salvation was done.
- In the same way, to enter God’s rest means that we rest. Rest from what?
  - *Rest from our religious works and attempts to earn our way into God’s favor.*
  - *Rest from the tyranny of sin. Sin is a brutal taskmaster that will exhaust you.*
  - *Rest from our worries and anxieties about life and our future, knowing that it is all in God’s hands.*
  - To rest in these ways requires faith that Jesus has secured our salvation, and is with us and for us in this life.

## 4

## God's rest requires diligence

### BIBLE VERSE

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

### APPLICATION

Wait a minute! Be diligent (that’s work) to enter his rest? It sounds like an oxymoron, a contradiction of terms.

Go back to the words of Jesus, **“Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”** Great, is he going to give us a mattress? Nope, he provides us with a yoke. Take my yoke upon you. A yoke is an instrument of work.

*Jesus knows that the best way to give a weary person rest is to offer them a new way of carrying life that involves His strength.*

*Entering Christ’s rest means we cease from our own works, but we become alive and involved in His work.*

- **[Deu 5:15 NKJV] 15 And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.**

#### QUOTE

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China, had a little jingle he was fond of quoting... God speaks to us,

*“Bear not a single care thyself. One is too much for thee.*

*The work is mine, and mine alone. Thy work is to rest in Me.”*

Hudson Taylor,

#### CUSTOM BLOCK

The rest of God is not a rest of inactivity. Though God is rested from all His work, he is still working, but He is working from the finished work of the cross. ***In the same way, we rest by working FROM our salvation, not FOR our salvation.***

- ***The rest He mentions here is not so much a rest of RECOVERY of strength, but a rest of satisfaction and contentment in the work of Christ.***

Instead of depleting one's strength, restful activity provides strength.

Instead of wearing one's soul, restful activity rejuvenates it.

Instead of bringing anxiety and sorrow, restful work brings joy and peace.

#### QUOTE

***“Realism sees that life is a succession of burdens; we cannot get away from them; thus instead of offering escape, Jesus offers equipment. Jesus means that obedience to His yoke will develop***

*in us a balance and a ‘way’ of carrying life that will give more rest than the way we have been living.”*

Frederick Bruner,

## INSIGHT

Someone once said that rest is being in God’s design. When you and I learn to enter into what God has designed us to be in Christ, we find rest. And to enter in takes diligence in aligning ourselves with the value system of Jesus.

## BE DILIGENT

*Diligence in prayer = strength and rest*

*Diligence in the scriptures = strength and rest*

*Diligence in obedience = strength and rest*

*Diligence in repentance and surrender = strength and rest*

## HONESTY

Let’s be honest. Sometimes following Jesus can feel to us like another weight on top of the already heavy burden of life itself.

- Every year your responsibilities grow
- Relationships get more complicates.
- Kids, sports, hobbies, finances, jobs, trips, houses, yards, in-laws, etc... anyone tired yet?

Now you want me to work some more?

- Be in a Christian community? Prioritize my church attendance? Give generously? Live sacrificially? Read my Bible and pray every single day? Serve my neighbors and serve in church... ugh, I’m exhausted just thinking about it.
- But here’s the promise that requires faith.

- If you are diligent to come alongside Jesus and match the pace of your life and your priorities to His, even at the sacrifice of all the other things in your life that wear you out, then life will become more restful.

## QUOTE

*Look within and be depressed. Look without and be distressed.  
But look to Jesus and be at rest.*

Corrie Ten Boom,

## CONCLUSION

We are going to stop here because it would be an injustice to stuff the rest of this incredible chapter into 10 more minutes. We've gone through a lot of theological brain exercise, so let's close today by evaluating some practical next steps. What I want you to do is write these questions down, or snap a pic of them. Take them home and take 15 minutes to answer them individually and maybe with your spouse and/or kids.

### **A.) WHAT ARE THE TOP 3-5 THINGS THAT YOU BELIEVE ARE WEARING YOU OUT THE MOST?**

This could be so many things. List the things in this world that are keeping you from resting in the Lord:

- Physically – might be work, injury, sickness or pain.
- Emotionally – stress, anxiety, worry, relationships, death
- Spiritually – sin in your life, areas of disobedience
- Mentally – the problems you're trying to solve that keep you up thinking all night about.

You might not be able to change some of these circumstances, but you can allow God to change the way you see them and the way they affect you. Perhaps these are things you are doing in your own strength apart from resting in Christ.

### **B.) WITHIN YOUR PRIORITIES, WHAT THINGS NEED TO BE REORDERED AROUND THE VALUE SYSTEM OF JESUS?**



Are you not entering the best God has for you because your priorities have become skewed. You're settling for second best because you haven't put Christ at the center of your life?

If you can say:

- I'm prioritizing a day of Sabbath and rest for my family when we can seek the Lord and enjoy our relationship with our family and the Christian community. I know it's going to require me to say no to that over time, which might be saying no to my new boat, but I believe that if I prioritize in my life what matters to Jesus, I will experience rest.
- I'm going to prioritize a time where I disconnect and spend time with God praying, singing, and reading the scripture. But I really want to unplug and just veg on the couch and binge-watch, "This is Us." I'll tell you right now, one of those things will bring you into God's rest, but it requires faith.
- I'm going to church on Sundays and I'm getting involved in a home fellowship. Well, that might mean the kid's sports schedule might have to be adjusted.

We can't complain about not experiencing the rest that Jesus invites us into if we aren't being diligent to align ourselves by faith to enter that rest.

I just need... our flesh has places to turn when we are exhausted:

- *I just need a drink*
- *I just need a vacation*
- *I just need to watch 42 consecutive episodes of my favorite show in my pajamas.*

Hey, God has given us some things that refresh us. A bath does it for me... but only temporarily.

What I need more than anything is to trust that when I prioritize Christ in my life, His life-giving strength and supernatural rest will become mine.

But I can't. I'm in such a hurry! Than stop. You have to stop by faith. I love what theologian Dallas Willard said:

## QUOTE

*Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.*

Dallas Willard,

**C.) IF ENTERING GOD'S REST REQUIRES FAITH, WHAT STEPS OF FAITH DO I NEED TO TAKE NEXT?**

Evaluate the conviction of the Spirit and if you don't feel as though you have the faith to take the next steps, confess that to the Lord and ask Him for the faith to enter into His rest.

- The faith to say yes to something or no to something else.
- The faith to add something to my schedule or to remove something from my schedule.

**[Mar 9:23-24 NKJV] 23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things [are] possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"**

**D.) KNOWING THAT MY ULTIMATE REST IS COMING IN HEAVEN, HOW CAN I ENTER THAT REST NOW?**

Does the reality of heaven drive your decisions on earth? If our ultimate rest is coming, we can work to enter His rest now.

**APPLICATION**

If I'm headed to heaven, God's ultimate rest, I can rest easier when things don't go as planned in my life. I can let go of worry and fear and anxiety about my earthly future because I know my eternal future. Write out the worries, anxieties, and fears that concern you the most in this life, and pray through each one, surrendering them to the Lord in light of His eternal promise. If you must, do it every day!