

Title" *Entering into Rest*

Text: 4:3-11

Turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 4 and let's begin reading at Vs 3.....Hebrews 4 verse 3...

(Read 4:3-11)

Prayer

Let me just remind you that this portion of scripture is part of a Warning passage. There are 5 warning passages in the book of Hebrews. This is the second one. It began with chapter 3 verse 7 and continues through chapter 4...

This second warning passage deals with the wilderness travels of the Children of Israel. The key verse in this warning ~~passage~~ is Vs 7 of Chapter 3...."Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as the Jews did in the wilderness at the time when they tested God."

Now, we have looked ~~at~~ already at a little about what this wilderness experience of the Jews would be if you just directly applied it to Christians. For example: when they came out-off Egypt they were redeemed said the Bible. They shed the blood of a lamb and the death angel passed over and did not bring death to the first born child. That is the meaning of the pass-over... Christ is our pass-over. So, by way of application. OUT OFF EGYPT IS LIKE GETTING SAVED. It is like becoming a believer in Jesus.

But, it only takes 11 days to travel from Egypt to Canaan if you walk. And yet, it took the Israelites 40 years. They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Finally, they went into Canaan.

Now, remember, that Canaan does not represent heaven because the Bible clearly teaches that they looked for another city whose builder and maker is God. Thus, Canaan represented Victory to those who had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Even though there were many battles they had to fight in terms of conquering the land. It still represented VICTORY.

And of course even though we have victory of salvation through Jesus Christ, there are still many battles we have to fight in living the christian life.

So, the wilderness wandersing represents Carnal Christianity....

Now, ~~last Sunday~~ ^{Thurs Morning} we looked at chapter 4 verse 1 and 2 on the subject of THE PROMISE OF GOD'S REST...And we looked at the meaning of this promise as it applies to our entering into God's reast....And the great need of mixing the facts of the gospel with our faith...And when we do this salvation happens in the person's life. *And a change will occur.*

(2E) Now, let's move on to the proof of scripture behind this application of ~~the wilderness wandersings~~ the wilderness wandersings to salvation. We find this proof in verse 3 through 9....And if you have studied this, I am sure you will agree that it is hard to interpret and to understand the meaning of rest. But, let's try to put it together.

I believe there are three basic lines of thought.

(1F) The first one deals with our conversion ..And Paul is going to prove that point from scripture. Our conversion, as believers, the ones to whom he wrote in that day. *Also,* it is applicalbe to us today.

Vs 3 begin with this statement: "For we who have believed enter that ~~the~~ Rest".....That is an interesting statement in light of what he just said in verse 1 and 2....

If you translate literally it would read: "For the ones who did believe are continuing to enter into the rest."

That ~~be~~ means at a point in time they believed....You see, it is referring to conversion....

And the point is that if you have become a blievaer in christ, you have really accepted Jesus into your life, you have already entered and ~~are~~ continuing to enter.....

Now, the continuing to enter can mean one of two things....One, the final conclusion of whatever the rest is hasn't happened yet.....You have entered into it, but it hasn't reached its finall conclusion yet...

You are still within the entering process.

Or, ^{secondly} it can mean that everyone who gets saved, the "rest" is opened to all and they are continuing to enter into it.

But the point is: that if you have received salvation, if you have really become saved, you have entered into rest.

So, whatever the meaning of rest is (and I haven't given you the meaning yet) whatever the meaning is, we are already in it. *Right*

Now, aren't you glad about that? Aren't you glad that you are not hanging out there in the wilderness. You are already in....

Now, let's move one....In addition to conversion which Paul proves by going back to that passage in Psalms again, Vs 3 "as I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter my rest".....

So, in content God is talking about ~~the~~ people who believe. And that makes sense from chapter 3 because the reason they didn't go into Canaan was because they didn't believe.

So, if you believe you have entered into it. And the proof therefore comes out-off Psalms 95.....And that quote in Vs 3 is from Psalms 95.....

But the problem comes in that last phrase of Vs 3...."although His works were finished from the foundation of the world."

(2F) Now, the second line of thought in proving about God's rest....first was our conversion.....if you believe you are in....Secondly, is creation. Paul takes us back to creation to prove a point.....

I know this is very detailed. But it is very important in application... So stay with me.....

Back to creation, he says, we remember that His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

And now, Paul quotes again from the O.T. in Vs 4. He says, "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works." That is a quote from Gen 1.. God created the world in six days and on the seventh he rested.

Now, I am asking you the question as I ask myself: "Why did he bring up creation? And the seventh day of rest after he has just discussed that we who believe are included in the rest?.... *Why*

Well, two things here.....

(16) One, to prove the continance of God's rest/ BEING OFFERED TO EVERYONE.

To prove the continence of God's rest being offered to everyone. Why do I say that? When God created the world in six days, each day ended like this: "THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE FIRST DAY."

But, if you will notice carefully in your Bibles in Genesis 1 when he comes to the seventh day, he does not say: THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WAS THE SEVENTH DAY."....

Do you recall the story of Jesus healing the sick man on the Sabbath day in John chapter 5...(Please say that you remember that story). Well, after Jesus healed this man he was accused of doing work on the Sabbath. And this was a violation of the Law. Do you remember what Jesus said to those Jews?....He said: "My Father is working until now, and so do I."

That in creation the seventh day never meant the stopping of work. And Yet, how many people do you know who believe that. They believe that the seventh day or the sabbath is the day you stop work. That is not the meaning of it. And Jesus clearly says so.

And the point is that the seventh day, which God established has never ended. Never ended. God's rest is still available today. It is just as available as it was in the O.T.

In each day of creation, it began and ended. But not so on the seventh day. It never ended. We are still in the ~~midst~~ midst of God's rest.

What does 'rest' mean from Creation? Does it mean that God stopped working? Oh, no...It referred to accomplishment, satisfaction, enjoyment. Some particular phases of God's marvilous work was done and completed which becomes a type forever.

It simply means this, friends, to put it really, simply: salvation... Salvation....is already a settled matter. But, it never stopped in terms of its ~~op~~ opportunity and availability. God didnt stop working and healing on the Sabbath day. Because Gos' sabbath or God's rest...the seventh day.... was a symbol of God's whole opportunity to everyone to enter rest...

It was given to the Jews who lived in the wilderness. It was given to those who lived in Paul's day. And it is still given to us. It refers to the opportunity of God's rest. And this has never ended ~~but~~ since the seventh day of creation. And so it proves the continuence of God's rest.

(26) The second reason why he brought up creation was that he was referring to the consequences of Israel in the wilderness.

Look please at Vs 6. "Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience."

The point that I am making is that many people when they interpret Hebrews 4 refer God's rest only to Canaan....But, Paul is saying that from creation until now God's rest has been available and open to all people. And it is obviouse that those of the time of the wilderness did not experience God's rest because of unbelief. And there still remains, therefore, God's rest.....Pray the Lord

(3F) But then Paul gives us a third line of proof...And that concerns the comments in David's time. You see, David lived about 350 years after they got out off the wilderness.

Notice, what he says in Vs 7. "He again fixes a certain day, Today".... Today, of course referred to the days of David. But Paul uses it in reference to the Jews that he was writting to. As a matter of fact, the "TODAY" still means 'today'. TODAY IS THE TODAY OF GOD'S OPPORUNTIY. Just as much as ~~was~~ it was THE TODAY in Israels wanderings in the wilderness....or, when Paul wrote this book...It is still the 'TODAY'. ~~But that day is~~

Vs 7..."Today, saying through David after so ~~long~~ long a time" That is the message that was given to the Jews in the wilderness is still here in Davids day....What was it?.....

"Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts".

And ~~p~~ that is for today, just as it was in Paul's day...or Davids day... or for the Jews in the wilderness....

Now look at Vs 8...."For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that....

Now, there are two things, here, that I want you to see.

(16) One, is the removal of Canaan as the meaning of rest.....Vs 8..."If Joshua had given them rest....Joshua did give them the land of Canaan. If that was ~~rest~~, then he could^{not} have said 350 years later, today the rest is still available.....It would have had to be canaan. And they already had that... Are you following the logic of Paul's argument.

(26) Then, the second thing is the realization that a real rest still remains for the people of God,

Vs 9 says "There remains, therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God"

Now, I believe that there is one issue of rest here with two parts.... One issue of rest with two parts. And they are very important to you and to me.

about But, first of all before we get there look at vs 10....In this verse Paul establishes a principle. And this principle relates to all that Paul has been saying....

Vs 10 says "For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His."

That reminds you of creation. You see, Paul is tying it all together. The entering his rest refers you back to Vs 3....We who believed entered the rest. So, the whole thing is tied together. They are not separate thoughts.

And then Vs 11, we have a plea to enter God's rest. Which says, "let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience." The example is the Jews in the wilderness

9E Now, what is this whole thing referring to? (IF) May I share with you some views that some people hold which are incorrect, concerning this passage.

(16) One, some people have said: that this refers to a deeper walk with God. They say that is the meaning of the rest.....A deeper walk with God.

26 Secondly, and closely related to the first view is that this refers to Christians who are living carnal lives. Because they are involved in doing works. And as soon as you stop doing those works you come into rest.

You see, some folks say that if we will just stop ~~our~~ works and our stroggles that some how we would get into rest and victory.

Now, I would like to examine as to whether that is a ~~possible~~ possible view of this passage. And I want to show you why it isn't....

~~It can't be.~~ Because according to Vs 10 which says "For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as..God..did..from.. His..." Now, listen, if you think that your works are bad and you need to get into victory, I want to tell you one thing...GOD"S WASN"T.....God's works, ~~what~~ are not treated as bad, but Good....And the verse says that our works, whatever they are...are treated the same way...As Good... You see, ~~our~~ view of that interpretation is that all of our ~~bad~~ works have been bad, frustrating and discouraging and wandering in the wilderness. Now we enter into the rest of God.

Oh, NO.....we already know from Vs 3 that if you believed in Christ you have entered that rest.....Period.....He is not talking about works being bad. Because God's works are not bad.

And that leds us to a second problem.....The question is: who is "He" referring to?

Look back at Vs 3...He said "WE"....When ever Paul talks about believers he says "WE"...If he is talking directly to them he uses the pronoun "YOU".. When he refers to those in the wilderness he uses the pronoun "THEY"..THEM! And this is ture all the way up until Vs 10. And in Vs 10 Paul changes prohounce and use "HE" or "HIS" say "The One" --

2F I believe there are only two possibilities. Of which the last one is the best.

1G The first possiblility is that a believer is under discussion who enters heaven at death. WHY?.....Revelation 14:11 says "blessed are they who die in the Lord, who do rest from thier labor."

That is the same thing we have here. If you enter into his rest, you cease from your own works or labors. They are not treated as bad. They are treated as good.....

As God ceased from the ~~work~~ work of creation in the sense that ~~it~~ was complete, final.....From that, God rested. So, also you in your ~~life~~ life have done many things for God. But one day, praise God, you will cease from all those labors and you will enter into heavenly rest.....

That is one possible view...It is good! ⁽²⁶⁾ But the second ^{poss} ^{ble} ^{ty} I believe is better....

If you are following the discussion of Hebrews from chapter 3 verse 1, which is the beginning of this discussion. It says to consider WHO?..... ANYONE.....JESUS.....

"Consider Jesus".....And if you have followed the pronounces carefully in the book, the "HE" IS referring to JESUS...

The "you" and "we" refers to believers, either in Paul's day or in our day.

And the "them" and the "they" refers to those in the wilderness....or The Jews in O.T. times.

Now, look at this carefully.....

Vs 10 would mean "HE" or "the One(NAS) and that refers to Christ..... You say, "Wait a minute, Christ is not mentioned in the content"...OH YES... Because this has been a non stop discussion since Verse 1 of chapter 3... It is Christ. And "HE" or "the ONE" according to the text has entered into his rest...God's rest....meaning in the final analysis "heavenly rest"... And notice Vs 14 which reaffirms the content....It says: "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus."

And it only makes sense to me that the two ideas are tied together.

Vs 10 .."HE" or "the ONE" meaning Christ who has entered His rest. He has ceased from his work.....PRAISE GOD SALVATION IS COMPLETED.

When Christ died on the cross it was finished. Just as surely as when God created the world and it was finished. It was done....Jesus said on the cross...IT IS FINISHED.....

And Hebrews 1:3 reminds us that when Jesus purified our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.....It is Jesus who entered into the rest....showing us that he completed the work of slavation

Then it says in Vs 11...."let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest...."Heavenly rest...."lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.".....

(4F) I believe this is the only consistent view of this passage.....

Two final things about Vs 11 and the plea to enter God's rest.

1F One, is the diligence to be with the Lord in heaven. Oh, friends, I know that there are a lot of issues that christians should be confronting here on earth....But, the real issue is heaven.....There is no guarantee that when you walk out of this room today that you will live to see tomorrow.. Oh, listen, brother, all the life that is going on right now ~~will~~ will make no difference to you in the moment of death....THE REAL ISSUE IS HEAVEN... ARE YOU GOING THERE?.....

And this text is saying that you be diligent with all your heart to enter that rest...to enter heaven.....

Now, if you have believed in christ, you have already entered.....That is your final destination...your final home....Oh, you haven't arrived yet. But that is your destination.....That is your position...That is your guarantee.... *Ticket out of wilderness*

There is one kind of rest that Paul is talking about in chapter 4... And that is salvation.....And salvation always involves two parts.

First, when you come into it...When you receive Christ. And secondly, when that time come ~~to~~ when God calls ^{you} you home and and we shall see Jesus face to face.....

2F And the second thing-about vs 11 is the danger of not going to heaven because of ^{unbelief}unbelief.....When you do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you do not receive Christ as your Saviour, you are disobedient to Almighty God. For the Bible teaches that one comes unto the Father except through Jesus Christ.....

And we have the great example of the Jews who could not go into the promised land because of unbelief.....And also we cannot go to heaven if we do not believe in the final, complete work of Jesus Christ....

For there is salvation in one one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.....

BE Now, let me summarize the four kinds of rest found in Hebrews 3 and 4.
IF One, would be creationchapter 4:4 And that would refer to the opportunity to be saved.....God's rest is never finished since the seventh day after the six days of creation...The opportunity for people ~~was~~ every where that today is still the day of salvation....Today you can ~~turn~~ turn to Christ *and be saved*

2F Number two, is Canaan rest.... This is chapter 3:7-19...Chapter 3 deals with the example of rest...illustrated out-off the O.T. And don 't get all of your doctrine there. Because you will miss apply it as many folks have. It is just the example of it.

3F Number three is salvation rest. This is chapter 4:1,2,3, 8, 9...And this is the bases of your final rest.....You must be saved. You must believe in Jesus.

4F And number four is heaven..which is the final reward. Hebrews 4:10-11.

And I believe that God wants each of us to see the point: THAT THE MAJOR REASON WHY PEOPLE ARE NOT BECOMEING BELIEVERS IN CHRIST AND ARE NOT ASSURED of heaven is because the word they heard was not united with faith...That they now trust and relay completely upon that word which they have heard.

The whole issue is: DO YOU BELIEVE THE BOOK. AND ARE YOU TRUSTING ON IT It says that Jesus died for your sins. He paid for all your sins...He arose again from the dead and was seen by many people. He ascended into heaven and one day he is coming back for us....DO YOU BELIEVE THAT....ARE YOU ~~TRUSTING~~ TRUSTING IT...ARE YOU PERSUADED THAT THAT IS THE TRUTH.....

That is the issue of salvation.

Let us pray