



**April 26, 2026**

## **Anchored in Rest. (Hebrews 4)**

Hebrews 4:1-13 (ESV)

4 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

“As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’ ”

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” 5 And again in this passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. 9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God’s

rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

**11** Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. **12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **13** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- In Psalm 3, King David talks about enemies being all around him, and a great battle coming. But he says right in the middle, *I lay down and slept. I woke again, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Psalm 3:5-6*
- How did David rest like this?
- This can be a valid test for our faith. Do you know rest? Is there a security that brings you assurance even if sleep is lost?
- David also wrote in Psalm 23: He restores my soul. That's the rest I think he had in Psalm 3. That's the kind of rest everyone on this planet is really after.
- And that's the rest that Hebrews will address in chapter 4.
- Hebrews 4:10 (ESV) **10** *for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.*
- The word **work** here has a courtroom ring to it. The works of the law are your efforts to be good, and to live up to some legal standard. So the **rest** from that kind of **work** is a legal rest.
- We are constantly striving to live up to someone's standards in life. Why? So that we a good verdict about the kind of person we are.
- That kind of effort is non-stop, and it is exhausting.
- It's exhausting because in the end we know that we can't ever get the verdict we want.
- We know, that no matter how hard we try, we can't ever live up to the standard.
- There's no rest from our works. They haunt us. Your standards, whether set for other people or yourself, haunt you. Your failure to live up to them haunt you. You can't sleep. Not truly.
- Hebrews gives us good news: *There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. (vs 9)*
- What is this rest?
- The preacher is still using Psalm 95. Psalm 95 recounts the Exodus story for God's people. They are brought out of Egypt, out of slavery, and into the desert, and they are promised a land that God himself will give them.
- Here's a key to this whole passage: the preacher never calls the land, **The Promised Land**. Instead, he calls it **God's rest**.
- Also, it will help to know that Hebrews uses the word **rest** in very different ways in lines very close to each other. Every sentence is a different aspect of rest.

Rest means: The Promised Land.

- vs 3 says: "I declared on my anger...they shall never enter my rest." That's God warning the Israelites: *If you keep rebelling like this you don't get to enter the land.* Canaan was seen by God as a place of rest for his people.

## Rest means: The Sabbath.

- Sabbath means “to cease.” That’s what God commanded his people do one day out of every seven days.
- Take time to remember the God who rescued you from your slavery.
- When you cease, and keep the Sabbath rest, it’s a declaration of your freedom.

## Rest means: Satisfaction.

- Hebrews cites from Genesis in verses 3 & 4. He says God’s work *has been finished since the foundation of the world*. And this is the line you might recognize: *And on the seventh day God rested from all his work*. It’s all straight from the creation account in Genesis.
- This idea of God resting from his work helps us with what rest is.
- We recognize that God can’t get tired the way we do.
- If that’s true, then what does it mean that *God rested*?
- Genesis will tell us that as God created, He said it was **good**. *It is good* means it is finished. It is completed. God was satisfied with what he had done.
- God rests on the 7th day. God is satisfied with all he has made.
- A deep inner rest is what you need. It is to be able to put down all your work, just like God did, and to be able to be completely satisfied with what you’ve done, and utterly at rest with who you are.
- And now we see why we lack rest. The work under all that work we can’t ever escape is the work of trying to prove ourselves. No vacation in the world can give you that kind of rest.
- Is true rest possible?

## Rest means: The Gospel.

- Hebrews 4:2–3 (ESV) **2** *For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.* **3** *For we who have believed enter that rest...*
- It’s present tense. **Have believed...enter**. This is not something we wait for. It’s something we get to experience right now. It’s the gospel. That’s what can bring us this true rest that we need.
- Verse 8 will take the argument even further. Hebrews 4:8 says, (ESV) **8** *For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.*
- Joshua is the one who led God’s people out of the desert and into the promised land.
- Joshua brought them to rest, but it was never a complete rest. And the incompleteness of Joshua’s rest anticipates a greater and perfect rest to come, through Jesus.
- The name Joshua in the OT is the name Jesus in the New.
- The first Joshua couldn’t bring the rest we really need. Jesus would come and bring true rest.
- That rest comes from believing the gospel. Believing that Jesus has done all the work needed to make us acceptable to God.

- In Jesus there is no need for more work. He has done it all. It is finished. God is satisfied.
- Look at verse 10 again: *Whoever enters this gospel rest, can rest from work, just like God rested from his.* Alright, how do we do that? How do we enter this rest?
- The end of this passage has verses that are quite famous.
- Vs 12 says the Word of God is like an incredibly sharp sword. It cuts through everything, it penetrates everything. It will pierce all the way down to the bottom of your heart. And it will lay open the real you.
- Scripture stabs down to all of it. It will expose the reasons that you do anything at all.
- Vs 13: There are two words to note.
- The first word is naked. Scripture is so good at dressing you down, that you'll feel naked.
- **You'll never enter the rest Jesus brings until you first stand fully uncovered before God.**
- Adam and Eve are in the garden and they are naked. They were perfectly at rest with who they were. They were satisfied with who they were.
- Then what happened? They turned away from God. They became their own lord and savior.
- And immediately they have this sense of not being right. They realize for the first time ever that they are naked.
- They don't have the word for it, but they know they've sinned.
- And they hide from God in the trees. They immediately try to cover up with fig leaves.
- That's what you have to experience too. And the Word of God is the only thing that bring it.
- If that's not terrifying enough, the second word here is *exposed*.
- *Exposed* is the word *trachelizo*. It means to stretch the neck back in order to kill.
- The picture Hebrews has in mind is the sacrifice of an animal in the temple. The priest would pull the lambs head back and expose the neck, and pull the knife, and game over for the lamb.
- If we're guilty, then God has to put things right. We would expect no less of a God who was halfway serious about justice.
- And it means we will be cut off and cut down.
- But good news: the very next verse tells us of a merciful high priest who comes in and rescues us.
- Jesus experienced cosmic restlessness, forsaken by God...separated from the source of eternal rest. He was in hell, so we could have eternal rest. And when he died, he said, It is finished.
- What? The work you're trying to do. The work of covering up. The work of justifying yourself. The constant, bone crushing, tiring work of proving you matter. Jesus did it for you.
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- The good news of Christianity is that Jesus has done the work.
- Sabbath is to trust that in Jesus the work that really matters really is finished.

Well may the accuser roar  
 Of sins that I have done;  
 I know them all and thousands more  
 Jehovah knoweth none.

That's rest. Rest from criticism, rest from having to prove yourself, rest from having to defend yourself, you see. That's rest. Do you know that rest?

- Go to Jesus. Surrender your life to him. And enter God's true rest.