
Week 9 Sermon, October 15, 2023

Hebrews 4:1-11 – *Entering His Rest*

Discussion Questions

1. Reread Hebrews 3:7-4:11. Based upon all that was written in verses 3:7-19, the author begins chapter 4 by affirming that the promise of entering God's rest still stands. Then, with the failure of the generation of the Exodus as a backdrop, the exhortation is given in verse 1, "... *let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.*" What does the phrase, "*let us fear*" mean? How does this fear help us to keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus?
 2. In 4:2 we see a reminder that the good news of "*such a great salvation*" has come to these readers, (Hebrews 2:3-4) just as it came from God to the Israelites in the wilderness. However, the author points out that the message they heard did not benefit those in the wilderness. What do we learn from 4:2 about why this occurred? What words and deeds of the Israelites demonstrated that they were "faith-less"? Read Ephesians 2:8-9 along with Hebrews 11:6. Discuss the importance of faith and share other Bible verses that come to mind to support this premise.
 3. Hebrews 4:3 says, "*For we who have believed enter that rest. . . .*" It is genuine, active faith that is necessary to enter God's rest. What are some ways people are deceived in thinking their "faith" is genuine when, in fact, they are storing up the wrath of God? Do you know anyone who believes they have saving faith, but you are not so convinced? Spend time praying for them and asking God for wisdom and boldness to lovingly exhort them.
 4. In chapter 4 verses 3, 4, and 10, the author speaks about God resting from His work. He refers specifically to God's work in creation. In verse 10, we see that everyone who has entered God's rest has also rested from his works. Thinking of those who do not have faith in Christ, what are examples of the works they do to try to earn the favor of God? What does God say about these works (see Isaiah 64:6)? Is it possible for a person to be justified by works or, in other words, to work their way into Heaven (see Galatians 2:16)? Read Matthew 11:28-30 and discuss the kind of rest that comes only through Jesus.
 5. Discuss D.A. Carson's quote, "*It is true, of course, that no man enters the kingdom because of his obedience; but it is equally true that no man enters the kingdom who is not obedient.*" What is the relevance of obedience in the life of the believer (see Hebrews 5:9; John 3:36; 14:15, 21, 23-24)?
 6. Christians are encouraged to actively live out their faith. In verse 11, the author once again uses corporate language (see 3:12-13, 4:1, 11). We are commanded to come alongside each other, encouraging one another to strive in the faith—to keep believing and to persevere in living our lives for the glory of God. God gifts us with each other, using us as a means of grace in one another's lives. Besides praying with—and for—one another, what are some practical ways you can encourage other believers to keep their eyes fixed on the finished work of Jesus?
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