

The Rest God Promised

Hebrews 4:4-10

October 10, 2026

We're going to start in Matthew Chapter 11, but we are returning to Hebrews chapter 4, learning about this concept of entering into God's rest. And I want to begin with this invitation from Jesus out of Matthew 11:28. And this is one of the most familiar, favorite sayings of Jesus, when he extended a gracious invitation to all of us. "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I'm gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

If you have personally experienced the rest that Jesus offers, then you must have at some point been weary and heavy laden, whether you realize it or not. I hope that you are encouraged to know that the testimony of enjoying rest in the present is also kind of a looking forward to a hope of a future rest.

And that this testimony not only of a present, a rest from your sin, weariness over trying to overcome your sin, be freed from your sin, come out from under the condemnation of sin that's been dealt with in justification in our sanctification. We continue to struggle with this, continue to have to revisit the gospel to find the rest that he has promised and find our souls at rest.

But it is a fight. But then we keep looking ahead to a future rest where the promise is going to be consummated and we're going to enter into a time free from the presence of sin forever, when we will rest fully and finally in him. That is the testimony of saving faith. And every true Christian understands this struggle, understands this path of the past, the present, and the future, and the rest; the ultimate rest that we live with, but then struggle to find rest.

But then that future that I'm banking on that and I will land in that rest and be there forever. And so that's what we're going to meditate on even as we've just kind of introduced the concepts right now. But if you're in Hebrews 4, we covered three verses last time, Hebrews 4:1 to 3, and there were three main points there: Implication, proclamation, participation. I'll just read the verses.

"Therefore, let us fear, lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have fallen short of it." Now remember, we're entering in Hebrews 4:1, into an exposition, a targeted exposition, brief exposition, but very focused, of this pastor who's writing to his congregation during their trial and travail.

And he's drawing out implications of Psalm 95, which David wrote, when he points to a current rest, as long as it's called today, don't harden your hearts, but there's a rest for the people of God. So that's what he's drawing out. And he's saying while there's a promise of rest that remains, anyone of you, if you seem to fall in short of it, "let's fear, lest," we don't, "For indeed," verse 2, if we've, "we've had good news proclaimed to us, just as they also;" that is the people of the past, also "had good news."

They had, they were evangelized, "but the word that they heard did not profit those who were not united with faith among those who heard." So the word that they heard, the gospel message that they heard, same then as it is now. If you hear, but you don't believe, it doesn't profit you at all. You have to hear, believe, obey. And it's the obedience of faith. And that's



what brings the justification, the rest, the sanctification, the struggle to find rest. That's what this brings.

So we who have believed, he affirms to his congregation, he says, "we who have believed, including himself, himself and his congregation, we who have believed, we enter that rest, just as He also said, AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST, although His works were finished from the foundation of the world."

So the implication of a promise. What's the implication of a promise? The only way to benefit from a promise verse 1 is to believe it. A promise requires faith. This sets forth faith as the only means of attaining what's promised. Justification is by faith. So why is that? Because the opposite of rest is working. And just as works contrasts with faith, so also the promise comports with grace and contrasts with the law, contrasts with what's owed.

If it's promised, it's offered. It's by grace. So if we believe the promise, we enter the rest, just as Paul teaches in Romans chapter 4, verse 5. "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness." So to be justified by faith is to

receive the rest that God has promised. This is why we talked last time.

The second point about the proclamation of the gospel, then and now, verse 2. The hearing of the gospel doesn't benefit us unless it's joined with faith. Many, many people hear the gospel. If they don't believe it, they don't get the rest. If you as a Christian stop believing or are weak in faith, you also return to the struggle, to the travail, to the weariness, to the burden.

So even as believers, we need to continue believing. The promises don't do you any good if you turn your ears off to them or stop believing or turn your eyes and attention to something that will not give you rest. Can anybody testify that? Oh yeah, I've done that in trial and travail and difficulty I've tried to escape and find rest somewhere else. All it gives you is more weariness and greater burden.

So apart from faith, the gospel, all its promises lands on deaf ears; there is no rest. But if we hear the gospel and believe it, if we hear the promises and believe them, we cease from all of our works, we do enter into rest as God rested on the seventh day from his works. That's the point in verse 2.

So then the point in verse 3, on the participation of believers, this is just to say we enter into the same rest today in our time that's shared by believers of all time since that promise of entering God's rest remains on offer. In fact, it was put on offer in Genesis chapter 2, verse 2. It's offered to Adam and Eve, our first parents. It's offered to the generations of Moses and Joshua and David, this pastor, as well, and our day too.

So all those and only those who have believed enter into that rest, all those and only those who continue believing in, continue to receive that rest. So let's keep reading, "Just as He said," verse 3, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken somewhere in this way concerning the seventh day: 'AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL OF HIS WORKS'; and again in this passage, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'

"Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news proclaimed to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again determines a certain day, 'TODAY,' saying through David after so long a time just has

been said before, 'TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.'

"For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His."

So the pastor's exposition here, it's simple, straightforward. It seems almost like he's like holding us by the hand, point by point, because it's actually pretty basic. It's not hard to figure out his meaning. It's set on a simple point of application, that if you believe the promise of God, you'll enter his rest.

There's promise, there's fulfillment. And how is the promise fulfilled? It's fulfilled in those who receive that promise by his grace. We receive it by faith. We believe him, we believe him. How do you know you believe him? Because you obey the Word. You follow his instruction, and that is entering into his rest. That's taking on what Jesus called the light burden and the easy yoke. Still a yoke, still a burden to bear, but it's easy, it's light and it's pleasant.

Now we're going to go just a little bit deeper and it's, it'll be brief, but we're going to go deeper and examine the nature of this promised rest, which I hope will encourage all of you. But we're going to pose two questions. First, what is the nature of this promised rest? And then second, when do we get to enjoy this promised rest? What's the nature of it? When do we get to enjoy it? Number one: what's the nature of the promised rest? We said last time, I'll just raise it again.

There are ten references to rest in the first eleven verses here, and some of them are nouns, some of them are verbs, but most of the nouns and verbs, kind of, are coming from the same root in all but one of them. So nine of the ten are related to the verb *katapauo*.

As we learned last time, the verb means to cause to stop or to cause to cease. And it's in a positive sense, not like a smackdown, like a train wreck, you know, that causes you to stop, but it's much more positively oriented. It's to make to rest, kind of like a mom who puts her toddler down for a nap. That toddler doesn't want to rest kicking and screaming, but you know in an hour after that toddler wakes up, so much more pleasant and that mom knows that toddler needs a nap. So the mom is making the toddler take a nap.

Get some rest. Cease from your activity toddler and lay down in this bed. Get some rest. This is what God does for us. It's to make an activity end and thus to give rest, to bring into a condition or into a state of rest. So the ceasing from some work or activity leads to a state of rest or restfulness.

You have to keep in mind the end of the work is tied directly to the gospel. This rest is tied to the gospel in verse 2 and it's the result of the gospel. Okay? So you don't work for your burdens to be lifted on your own. This is not about you fixing yourself. It's not about you becoming a better you.

It's not becoming the best version of yourself, which I'm hearing coming out of a lot of pulpits these days, not faithful ones, but ones I hear online pastors using that language. Becoming the best version of yourself; and as if it's a Christian message. That's a message of a burden of works, that is works, that is not gospel.

One of the ten references to the word rest is a different word here, and it's a word in verse 9, *sabbatismos*. You can hear the Sabbath in that word, *sabbatismos*. And this is the only use of this word, not only in the Greek New Testament, but in the Greek Old Testament, as well, in the entire Bible. This is a very unique word specific for this context.

According to one lexicographer, *Sabbatismos* refers to quote, "a perfect Sabbath when man can cease from all his works as God did from his after completing creation, and he calls it a purely heavenly blessing toward which the Pilgrim people of God moves." End Quote.

I think he's on to something with that future look. But is that what the pastor's talking about here is a promise of rest, that is only realized there. It's purely, as in his terms, purely a heavenly blessing. That is to say, there is no rest realized now.

The pastor uses the present tense in verse 3. He says we who believed, have believed. Enter, present tense, enter that rest. So it's present tense. That's not just future, that's now, that's the promise. There is something present about this rest. Even if there is a future element that exists, remains for us, there's still a present tense, rest.

There's another lexicographer who says that, "*Sabbatismos* refers to an already, not yet kind of a rest." I value this comment here. He says, "here are the rest typified by the Sabbath is seen as the rest of the heart provided in Christ." He points to Matthew 11:29. So the rest typified by the Sabbath, the *Sabbatismos*, is seen as the rest of the heart provided in

Christ to be realized partially now and fully in the life to come.

I could quibble with that just a little bit, but I'm not going to because I think John Owen actually unpacks this really, really well. But the comment there about this partially now, fully in the life to come, I'd say, even in the faith, the belief in the promise of the gospel, it's fully now experienced, in fits and starts now, fully consummated later, fully experienced later, but it's fully realized right now.

So that's why I'm quibbling just a little bit. But here's what John Owen says. He says, "The state of sin under the law is a state of all labor and no rest." He's talking about us, in a state of sin, prior to any salvation, prior to conversion, prior to regeneration, new birth, prior to putting faith in the promise of the gospel and becoming a Christian. That's the state of sin under the law.

It's a state of Labor, no rest. I didn't feel, if you were to talk to my young self in my enslavement to sin, I didn't feel enslaved. I thought it was free. I was enjoying my life until that meddlesome, troublesome Holy Spirit started to convict me and all of a sudden I felt burdened.

I'm like, what is going on? This is the same kind of sin I was doing yesterday. Why today is this bugging me? And he didn't let me alone. It kept bugging me and got worse and worse and worse. And I'm kind of an idiot, so it took about eight or nine months for me to finally bow the knee and repent. I had to continue to feel a burden and a great burden.

The more I read the Word of God, the more I felt myself not feeling good or happy, but actually feeling burdened, weighed down, guilty, condemned. I was frightened. I knew if I took a bullet with my name on it, I'm going straight to hell. I was not at rest. But that awareness came to me at a point in time, I didn't have it much of the time. I wasn't at rest, I just didn't know it. I thought that's just the way life is.

John Owen goes on to say, "The future state of glory is all of rest, all rest. Future state of glory. The present state of believing and obedience is a mixed state, partly of Labor, partly of rest." Really appreciate the helpful distinctions that he's making as a scholastic scholar. He's talking about the distinction between the state of sin under the law, the present state of grace, and the future state of glory.

Owen goes on to elaborate on this mixed state of rest. He says, "On the one hand, we exist in a state of labor in

ourselves in the world, against sin, under affliction and persecution." That's even now in the state of grace, right? But then on the other hand, he affirms that, "The believer also lives in a state of rest in Christ and in his love and in his worship and his grace."

Scripture affirms, all throughout, this mixed state of affairs, that we have now in the state of grace, that is post salvation, living under trial, living under difficulty, temptation, and all those things. According to John Owen, "God intends good from this state of affairs. He uses the labor that we are going through and the difficulty, the trouble, to teach us to appreciate the rest even more, and also to long for more of it and a final consummation of it."

He says these things: that is the state of labor and the state of rest. He says, they have a great mutual respect under one another. Our labor makes our rest sweet, and our rest makes our labor easy. And so God is pleased to fill us and exercise us, all to prepare us duly for eternal rest with himself.

He's training us. He's preparing us. He's helping us to share his mind on the matter, so that we can't wait to shed this place and head there. He's making this place not our home, but pointing us to that home. So this term, *sabbatismos*, it really

encompasses God's rest for the believer in every age and in all its fullness.

And the pastor writes of the present state of rest, of believing in obedience, a mixed state of affairs, which feeds this final longing for a final rest. The future state of glory is all of rest, as Owen says. So there's also an eschatological component to this, right? It's going to become clearer, hopefully, as we moved from the what question now to the when question. Okay.

So when do we get to enjoy this promise rest? When do we get to enjoy this promised rest? Answer: now and then. And by that I don't mean we get to enjoy this promised rest occasionally, but that we get to enjoy this promised rest right now and also then; now and later.

So let's talk about the rest, first in the state of grace, which is this mixed state of labor and of rest. And then we'll talk about rest in the state of glory. So first we enjoy gospel rest, now in a state of grace. If I have six little sub-points, I'll introduce them by saying gospel rest means and then I'll give you the thing.

Gospel rest means A: An objective peace with God. Well that puts your heart at rest, if you were to recognize that night after night someone is creeping into your house. They're stealing some bit of stuff. You then wait up one night and you say I'm going to, I'm going to catch this person. You hear the little rustling around. You flip on the lights and you see it is some kind of huge 6 foot 5, stacked with muscle, fully armed to the teeth bandit, that is ready to kill you. That's a frightening thing to discover.

I thought it was just some teenage prankster, but it looks like this is a trained bandit warrior. I don't want anything to do with this. All of a sudden your heart is in your throat and you're sweating and your adrenaline is shooting; you either to fight or flight. It's the same thing when you awaken to the true enemy you have as an unbeliever in God, and you recognize that this God, there are images in scripture of him tearing you apart like a bear ripping open your chest.

"It's a terrifying thing to fall in the hands of a living God." And when you recognize God is your enemy, there are no better, more welcome words than these, in Romans 5:1, "having been justified by faith, we have abiding possession, peace with God."

He's still as scary. He's still as frightening and powerful and terrifying as he ever was. But now he stands in front of you, and all the fangs are bared towards your enemies, all the claws come out toward things that trouble you, because you're behind him and you follow him. He's for you, not against you.

This objective peace with God, reconciled to God by God, no work that you've done. It's all in Christ and through faith. He reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, Colossians 1:22. This puts your heart at rest when you realize, the one who was your enemy, and a powerful enemy indeed; it's not just that he could kill the body, he could kill your body and then cast your entire soul into hell for eternity where you suffer in torment justly, because the sins you've committed against him. When you find you have objective peace with God or your heart's at rest.

Gospel rest means, letter B: A Soul replenishing worship. There's a soul replenishing worship when you find that this one who was once your enemy and you made yourself his enemy, and now he makes you his friend and he brings you into his family and he lets you call him father.

He commands you to call him father. What do you want to do but worship him, thank him, give praise and glory to him. John Owen includes this is a very significant aspect of the *Sabbatismos*, word saying the Christians today we don't lose this Sabbath day principle of restful worship that Israel enjoyed under the law.

Are we worse off not allowed to have a day of rest? No, John Owen says no, "we get to worship God in spirit and truth." We got to replenish our souls week by week in his rest. He calls it the Evangelical Sabbath, observed now in the first day of the week, called the Lord's Day. That's what we call it, the Lord's Day.

I think Sabbatarianism or Evangelical Sabbath is a little confusing for people. That's why I don't like to use it. I like the Lord's Day, but we need to understand it's the same principle of Sabbath rest for us. And we have an even fuller rest in Christ than Israel did because he fulfilled the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ, and now we have all the images and the foreshadowing and the types and everything points to him, and we rest in that. Our minds are exploding with understanding and depth and it all fits together. So why do we



worship? Because God saved us, because he forgave us of our sins. He granted us eternal life.

Christ has reconciled us to the father, and by the adoption of the Spirit we get to enjoy God. We get to enjoy the author of life itself. He is our eternal reward, so we get to worship him.

Gospel rest means, letter C: means gospel learning. We come to this thing called church, which is a training center. We come here Sunday after Sunday, and we come into this church to learn the truth, to gain more knowledge, and to gain a deeper understanding every single week so that we can grow in grace and godliness.

This gospel learning leads to gospel living, and that gospel living leads to rest. This is Colossians 3:16 that we've covered last week, as the word of Christ dwells richly in us through the teaching and the admonishing and all wisdom of one another. You know, as we teach them on each other, we're singing with gratitude, gratitude is coming out of our hearts. Elevated language and elevated lyrical excellence accompanied with music leads us into rest, also takes us into another aspect of gospel rest.

Gospel rest means letter D: A subjective peace, a subjective peace. So there's an objective peace and then worship and then learning, deepening our understanding, and all this leads to a subjective peace. We learned about that in Colossians 3:15, that when the peace of Christ rules in our hearts, there's a state of objective peace with God that then leads directly to a subjective sense of peace that's enjoyed in the soul, also known as rest.

Philippians 4:4 through 7, Paul's talking about this sense of a subjective peace with God. He, Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, he said in Matthew 6:25 and falling don't worry about your life. Don't worry about what you eat, what you drink, what you wear. Don't worry about any of those things. You can be at rest and have a subjective sense of rest and peace, because your father, true objective peace, your father knows what you need.

If you're in a relationship with him as your father, that means the objective for peace is accomplished. You're in Christ, you belong to that family. You don't have to worry about anything. Seek first his kingdom, his righteousness, and that leads to another aspect of gospel rest.

Gospel rest means letter E: Sanctification. Sanctification, peaceful fruit of righteousness, Hebrews 12:11, calls it. If you wrote down Philippians 4:4 to 7, to read, just write down verses 8 and 9. Tack that on because that's again talking about sanctification. The things you've heard and seen and observed in me, you put these into practice and the God of peace will be with you.

When the God of peace is with you, you're at rest because you're growing in sanctification. You're nearer to him. Now in our present state of faith and obedience, we're in a mixed state of affairs, and we have to ask that question, is this rest unmitigated? Is it undisturbed? Is it unperturbed? No, we struggle while we live in this world against that triumvirate of trouble: the world and the flesh and the devil. We struggle with that. Paul writes about this in Galatians 5:17.

In fact, while I'm reading this, go ahead and turn back to Joshua. Since the pastor in Hebrews 4 is referred to Joshua, I'd like to mention him. But Paul writes in Galatians 5:17 that the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. And these two are in opposition to one another so that you may not do the things that you please; as a believer, as a justified, declared righteous by God Christian. Do you

always act in accordance with that justification? No, you do not. I'll answer for you, keep you honest.

So you don't always do the things you please. And Paul unpacks this. If you want to jot this down at Romans 7:14 to 25. That's that whole passage of the things I want to do, I don't do, but the things I don't want to do, these things I do. Why do I do this wretched man that I am, who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, right?

That whole state of affairs that we live in, of this falling in and out of rest, of this trouble that we experience. You can illustrate this when we go back to Joshua's generation. Consider the history and the nature of the rest that Joshua led Israel into. Though it was unfulfilled, it resulted in rest, yes, but then further struggle, conflict, trouble, and thus it was an incomplete state of affairs. That's why the author points out if Joshua had given them rest, they would wouldn't speak of another day promising rest.

Look at Joshua chapter 21. In Joshua 21 verses 43 and 44, we got a summary statement. Yahweh gave Israel all the land which he had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it, lived in it. Remember the kind of land, it was an inhabited

land; not an uninhabited wild land, not one that was overrun with animals.

It was one that was inhabited, cities built. The beds were still warm and they were big king size beds because there was a land of giants, right? So the Israelites could crawl and snuggle up and have plenty of room. So they entered into cities that they didn't build. They started reaping from crops that they hadn't planted. They just reaped what was sown.

They entered into a great land of plenty, and God fulfilled it. God gave them, verse 44, Joshua 21, God, Yahweh gave them rest on every side. So not only is there a great provision and ease and comfort, but he protects them. "He gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them."

Yahweh gave all their enemies into their hand and not one promise of the good promises which Yahweh had promised to the house of Israel failed. All came to pass. Joshua releases the two and a half tribes, Rubenites, Gadites and the half tribe at Manasseh to go back east of the Jordan to the territory that they wanted to inhabit, where they'd left their wives and children, their flocks and all that.

He released them to go take up their possession and then Joshua issued this charge to the remaining tribes. In Joshua 24, look over chapter 24, verses 14 to 18, Joshua tells these remaining, these tribes that are living in the land, in the land of promise, Canaan. "So now fear Yahweh. Serve Him in integrity and truth. Put away the gods which your fathers serve beyond the river in Egypt and serve Yahweh. Look, if it's evil in your sight to serve Yahweh, choose for yourself today whom you will serve, whether the gods which your father served, which are beyond the river, the gods of the Amorites, and whose land you're living."

I can tell you right now that's not going to give any rest. It's going to lead to trouble. "As for me in my house," he says, "we will serve Yahweh." You know what the people said? Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods. Right answer. There's a postscript at the end of that chapter that show those words were genuine, I believe genuine expressions of faith at that time.

Joshua 24:31 says this, "Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who knew all the work of Yahweh which he had done for Israel."

While Joshua was alive, while the elders were still alive, they continued on.

Now look at the first couple chapters in the book of Judges. There's an initial faithfulness, but then the story starts to change as various tribes start to fail to dispossess the Canaanites. They were commanded to kick out all the Canaanites, and some of them to exterminate them, and some of them they failed. They left them there. So what's the result? They started worshiping Baal, started worshiping the other Canaanite deities, and so God sent Judges to deliver them.

In chapter 2, end of the chapter, verses 20 to 23, God gives this explanation. "The anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, and He said, because this nation is trespassed against My covenant which I've commanded their fathers and has not listened to my voice. I also will no longer dispossessed before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of Yahweh to walk in it as their fathers did or not."

And so Yahweh allowed those nations to rest, to stay there, not dispossessing them quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua. The actual physical temporal situation of Israel in the Promised Land. Perennially struggling to resist

idolatry, often failing, perennially fighting battles against remaining Canaanite tribes. That becomes a picture, doesn't it?

For those who hear the gospel, who believe and embrace the gospel, receive the gospel offer of peace and enter into God's rest that remains within us. Canaanites running around in our heads, we struggle against this in our remaining sin, don't we? Pockets of trouble. You understand this perfectly, don't you? You ought to.

Though we're delivered from the eternal penalty of sin, having escaped the wrath of God by the substitutionary atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins, we nevertheless we're continually being delivered from the present power of sin, resisting temptations of the world, the flesh, the devil, always learning to fight these battles.

Just as Israel in their generation had to learn to fight their battles, we have battles to fight too. We need to learn to conquer by faith. So we're in a sense struggling against and fighting metaphorical Canaanites that remain within, banishing them from our land, exterminating them from our hearts because they are the ruiners of our rest.

We keep on, while we live in this body, in this time, we keep on growing in maturity strength. We increase in our consistency to resist temptation, turn from sin, walk righteously. But it's never a given, is it? You can't passively sit and let it happen to you. Doesn't happen by osmosis. We have to daily wholly depend on the grace of God to deliver us and continue to seek it, to be watchful, on guard, right.

If we try to conquer on our own, or if we walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit, we very quickly discover our weakness. We have to go to him again for rest. This is why we need another benefit of this gospel rest for the comfort, consolation of our souls.

This is the letter F, gospel rest means final one here: An abiding assurance. An abiding assurance which comes to us; we sorely need it, don't we? Because when we're troubled, when we fail, when we fall, we need to return to that gospel and find its promises remain true, all based on an objective work and accomplishment of Christ.

His redemption is accomplished, it's done. She needs to return, believe in it, trust in him. So we have to return to the promises of the gospel. Read earlier Colossians, 1:22. "He reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death."

Justification happened there. Reconciliation happened. But here's the hope. Here's the assurance "in order to present you before him, holy and blameless and beyond reproach." This gospel rest brings a gospel assurance and abiding assurance because what God started Philippians 1:6 and what did he start, he finishes, "He who began a good work in you will complete it to the day of Christ Jesus."

So within this time of labor and travail along our Pilgrim walk of ups and downs, of trials and triumphs; that we sometimes fail to believe well, sometimes our faith is weak, sometimes we enter into temptation, sometimes we submit to its deceptions and we fall into sin, into great trouble for our souls.

This is what makes the high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ so very precious to us, and this is why I think the pastor writes about that ministry in particular in the next verses in Hebrews chapter 4, verses 14 to 16. If you're not back in Hebrews 4, you can return there.

It's in our current state of humiliation that we need these assurances of our Lord Jesus Christ to remind us of his atonement and his forgiveness, very softly, tenderly, ever so kindly, patiently, Jesus is pleased to assure us by his Word and by his Spirit, so that we become more consistent to appropriate

these gospel promises and find rest. So we're quicker to "come to the throne of grace, to receive mercy and find grace and to help us in our time of need."

So we don't enter into temptation and fail, but we actually stand strong and stand firm. This ongoing struggle with sin, fight for holiness, can leave us feeling maybe sometimes weak, exhausted, not rested. We long for that glorious day when God delivers us all from the presence of sin forever, for all of eternity. So we're not only to enjoy the gospel rest now in the state of grace, but also second, we enjoy a gospel rest then, as well, in a state of glory.

Just a few texts in there in Hebrews go to Hebrews Chapter 11, Hebrews Chapter 11, starting with Abraham, who looked for rest, and he was thinking ahead to a state of glory. Hebrews 11:8 to 10. "By faith, Abraham, when he was called, he obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he's sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise. For he was looking," here it is, "for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

He's looking to a heavenly city, isn't he? Abraham, Sarah, Abel, Noah are all unpacked here. Verses 13 to 16, it says, "All these died in faith without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance." So there's an indication that they entered into some kind of rest, but they confess that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Those who say such things make it clear that they're seeking a country of their own. They're in travail. They're in a mixed state of trouble and travail and labor, but also experiencing some favor and rest and blessing. But they long for a country of their own. It says in verse 14. "Indeed, if they've been remembering that country from which they went out, they didn't have opportunity to return.

"But now they aspire to a better country, that's a heavenly one. and Therefore God's unashamed to be called their God, for He's prepared a city for them." We understand that. We have joined this company in the hall of faith here in Hebrews 11. On our own pilgrimage, we too seek a heavenly permanent home. We haven't come to a mountain that can be touched like Sinai, burning torches coming down, thunder, lightning.

The Sinai of old is described in Hebrews 12. But now Hebrews 12 verse 22, you have come to mountain Zion. You come to

the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to myriads of angels, to the festal gathering, the assembly of the firstborn who enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

So yes, we enjoy certain aspects of that gospel rest right now. We struggle now as we await its final consummation, verse 28, since we're receiving a kingdom which can't be shaken. So what's the nature of this rest? God causes us to stop working, to cease striving, so he can give us rest about the state of our souls before him.

He forgives our sin. He declares us righteous. We're in Christ when we trust him; we're forgiven, justified, we have eternal life, and we enter into his rest full stop. We enjoy that rest immediately upon believing, and we grow in that rest ever more fully as we progress in our sanctification.

And we anticipate with confident hope the final consummation of that rest in the state of glory. It's in the state of glory when we're delivered from the presence of sin forever in his blessed presence with a body fit for that purpose, that rest is fully, finally consummated.

Therefore, just to wrap up this section, verse 1, "let us fear, lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have fallen short of it." This is a call to teaching and admonishing one another, isn't it? It's a call to look out for your brother and your sister to make sure we're all striving together.

"Let us fear, lest, any one of you may seem to have fallen short because there does remain a Sabbath rest, a *Sabbatismos*, for the people of God, and he who enters that rest, rest from his works, just as God did from his. Therefore, verse 11, let's be diligent to enter that rest and avoid falling into the same pattern of disobedience as we have written all through the Scripture. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for this time. We've had to contemplate this, the nature of this rest, the different stages of it that you provide. But we do know that upon faith, as soon as we believe we have all of it, we don't have it in piece meal in part. We don't have just a teaser. It's not like an hors d'oeuvre and appetizer. No, it's the full thing right now. And yet, while we're in this state of grace, we do struggle. And that struggle is has a purpose.



It's a teaching purpose, a didactic purpose to teach us to share your heart, to share your thinking. We long for that day when this promise is fulfilled, completely consummated in glory. We ask that you would keep us faithful to the end and then we wouldn't look out just for ourselves, me, myself and I, but there would be concern for one another to make sure that no one is lagging behind, that we all get there together. Pray that you would shepherd us, Lord Jesus, by your spirit and your word in Jesus' name, Amen.