

8. Rest=Trust=Obedience

February 1, 2015

It is not easy to find a person who knows how to balance work and rest. Many of us are either very driven in our work or hobby or play so that we feel guilty to rest. I am guilty as charged when it comes to driven attitude. That's the physical side that leads to the emotional side. Then, we have another group of people who practically do nothing and expect someone else to work for them because they are too lazy.

But what about our spiritual side? Do we rest in God? Some of us may not even know the meaning of resting in the Lord. Does it mean we think about Jesus with the folding of our hands on our chests and make ourselves comfortable in our recliners and take a snooze during the Super Bowl game?

Speaking of the Super Bowl, when I checked the status of the tickets at 4:46 Friday afternoon, there were only 47 tickets left. The costs of the Super Bowl tickets range from \$9,419 for a nose-bleeding section to \$50,050 for the 50 yard line seating. In my opinion, those people who pay that much for the Super Bowl tickets have more money than brains.

Christians are no exception for not resting. Many of us feel guilty as well if we don't work, and just rest and seek the Lord Jesus in the quietness of our hearts. I guess that there are more "Marthas" than "Marys".

Luke 10:40-42 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

"Resting in God" does NOT mean becoming lazy. It means that we trust our Lord for who He is, what He promised, and how He fulfills His promises. Because of His faithfulness, we become obedient to the Lord in spite of the difficult looking circumstances. Thus we can have a simple formula: Rest=Trust=Obedience.

In other words, we don't have to take off work to obtain rest in the Lord. Nor do we need to drive to the beach or go to a secluded mountain side. It is available all day, everyday. And the best part is that it is as close as a prayer.

A. ENTERING INTO GOD'S REST

Hebrews 4:1-3 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 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. 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.

Entering into God's rest has been available since the beginning of the creation. The Lord created everything in the universe for six days and on the seventh day, He chose to rest. It was not because He desperately needed rest to recuperate from the exhaustion, rather to give us an example of resting on the seventh day, He simply rested. But before the Lord rested, He declared the seventh day to be holy.

Genesis 2:3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Before we go any further, let's get the definition of 'rest'. The original Greek word for this is "katapausis" which is a compound word composed of 'kata' and 'pauis.' The way it was used in this chapter, it refers to something that can be entered, like a room or a space – God's resting place for us.

By now, some of you may wonder what rest on the seventh day has to do with trusting the Lord. I am glad that you asked. To understand this, we need to go to the Book of Exodus:

Exodus 16:23-30 Then he said to them, "This is what the Lord has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'" 24 So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. 25 Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. 26 Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there will be none." 27 Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. 28 And the Lord said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? 29 See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

When the ancient Israelis cried out to the Lord in their hunger in the wilderness, He provided them 'manna' everyday. Each morning they had to go out and get their manna. But on the sixth day, the Israelis had to trust the Lord to provide them twice more amounts of manna for the seventh day, because the Lord told them that there wouldn't be any on that day.

A side note: Some Bible students think that the six day creation is not literal six of 24 hour days. Many of them are brilliant, methodical, and analytical brothers and sisters. They come up with all these biblical references to show that these were not literal 24 hours. Unfortunately, they all had the same two tendencies – taking the Scriptures out of context and not taking the Scripture literally – two fatal mistakes in studying the Bible. Another point they didn't think about is right here. If it was not a literal 24 hour day in the creation process, why would the Lord tell the Israelis to honor the literal 24 hour seventh day as Sabbath?

B. NEED THE RIGHT MINDSET

Hebrews 4:4-6 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,

There is an old saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." The Lord God graciously rescued the Israelis out of Egypt, where they were slaves and brought them out and they were on the way to the Promised Land. All they had to do were trusting the Lord and doing what He told them to do. But it goes against the human sinful nature. We don't like to be told, we want to do whatever we want to do without any limitation. If you say, "Nope, not me," you are lying through your teeth.

Rather than trusting and obeying the Lord, hence that they could enter into His rest, they chose to rebel against the Lord by distrusting Him and disobeying His commands. That results in not entering into His rest.

When we don't trust the Lord, we feel that we need to do something for our future. So we fret, we fidget, we concoct with measly plans to do something about our future. But the problem is that we don't have the foggiest idea what our immediate future holds, let alone distant future. I am sure that you've seen a TV commercial from Bayer Aspirin that gives us a glimpse of our utter ignorance of the future. It is much wiser, much simpler, and much easier to trust, obey, and rest in the Lord who knows our unknown future.

I am gonna tell you a true story. One of our brothers in our congregation used to be very fearful of just about anything and everything. But then again, he was not saved. Relax, I got his permission to talk about him. After he was saved one day in our church, his fear was not changed because he was still holding onto the control of his heart though he had no idea what to do. Whenever I had a chance to talk with him, he was in tears literally, because he was so fearful. It affected his work performance so much that he was about to be fired.

The Lord spoke to him patiently and he finally let go of his control and trusted the Lord to take care of him. He even started to tithe out of his trust and obedience to the Lord. He worked hard and became the best salesperson in Southern Arizona in his company and blew everyone's expectation. And now he is a totally changed man with joy and peace of the Lord in his heart. The Lord can do the same thing for you.

C. TODAY, NOT LATER

Hebrews 4:7-8 again He designates a certain day, 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." 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

Twice in these two verses the author of this Book stresses the urgency of entering into God's rest with the word 'today.' As every morning sun rises and it reminds us of God's faithfulness and the Lord is telling us that we need to rest in Him with trust and obedience.

In v8, the author used the name "Joshua." Yes, he was the one who led the Israelis to the Promised Land after Moses died. But the author is making a wordplay on that name. Because the Hebrew name "Joshua" is the same as the Greek name "Jesus."

In the OT, the Day of Atonement, a.k.a. Yom Kippur, is called a Sabbath day of complete rest according to Leviticus 16:29-31. On that day, people ceased completely from their own work. In the NT, Jesus as our Great High Priest has offered a once-for-all sacrifice that decisively dealt with sin. He has provided the final Day of Atonement sacrifice, and he thus offers people a spiritual rest, which they enter by believing this Good News of Jesus Christ.

God's rest that is available through Jesus has two aspects:

1) Those who believe in Him have ceased from their own works – they no longer work for God's acceptance, but they trust in Christ's finished work on the cross and enjoy the blessings of peace with God.

2) They look forward to an eternal life of rest and enjoyment in God's presence. Jesus Christ gives complete and perfect rest.

Matthew 11:28-30 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."

D. BE DILIGENT

Hebrews 4:9-11 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. 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

When we come to Jesus our Savior and Lord by faith, we find God's rest in our salvation, because we now have peace with God, since we are no longer the enemy of God. When we yield our own desire and learn of Him through the Word of God and obey Him by faith, we enjoy His rest in our submission to Him, because we have peace of God.

However, there is one major snag. Unless we are diligent in our faith in Him and obedience to Him, we CAN lose peace of God by becoming self-reliant that comes from our pride.

The opposite of the formula that I gave you at the beginning of this study is:
Self-reliance=Distrust in God=Rebellion against Him

You know the famous battle between the giant Goliath and a little guy David from 1 Samuel. When David was facing a giant, but in reality, the giant was facing the God of the universe. Because young David trusted his God, he could face the giant without fear and ran to him with a slingshot in his hand.

We all face giants in our lives from time to time. They, especially three of them, tend to stand in the way to our entrance to God's rest. They are presumption, panic, and pride.

We become presumptuous when we feel that we've got things all figured out, when we think that we can second-guess the Lord and how He should resolve our problems. We become panicked when we feel we're not going to make it, or the Lord is not doing things the way we want Him to do. Then, we see ourselves as grasshoppers and our problems as giants like the ancient Israelis did. We become prideful when we feel we can handle life's problems without the Lord's help, when we look to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps instead of relying on His help.

To slay those giants, grab the slingshot of faith and fill it with three smooth stones of these: Resist presumption; Refuse to panic, and release your pride. And let them rip. The way to God's rest will open.

E. REMEMBER THIS

We are restless until we find rest in God. Enter into His rest.