

Chapter 4 - **ENTRANCE INTO GOD’S REST**

Heb 4: 1 **Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into God’s rest (a key part of the gospel) any of you should seem to come short of it.**

Heb 4: 11 **Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest (by trusting and obeying God and His word) lest anyone fall through the same example of unbelief.**

I want to answer the question: "How does a person enter into God’s rest?" and to point out the simple steps that person must take, all included in the one act of surrender and faith.

1. Heb 4:9 **There is a Rest for the people of God – *like me, and I believe there is***

The first step is this: that a person learns to say, "I believe, in my heart, there is rest in a life of faith." Israel passed through two stages. This is beautifully expressed in Deut 6:23 **"He brought us out, that He might bring us in"** - Two parts of God's work of redemption - "He brought us out from Egypt (*where there’s no knowledge of God*) that He might bring us into Canaan (*where God is all*)." And this also is applicable to every believer. At your conversion, God brought you out of Egypt (*where everyone lives in the natural*), and the same almighty God is longing to bring you into the Canaan life (*everyone lives in the Spirit*).

God brought the Israelites out, but they would not let Him bring them in and they had to wander for forty years in the wilderness, an example, alas, of so many Christians. God brings them out in conversion, but they will not let Him bring them in into all that He has prepared for them. To someone who asks me, "How can I enter into God’s rest?" I say, first of all, speak this word, "I do believe that there is a rest into which Jesus, my Joshua, can bring a trusting soul." And if you would know what the difference is between the two lives, the life you have been leading, and the life you now want to lead, just look at the contrast between the wilderness and Canaan.

What are the points of difference? In the wilderness, wandering for forty years, backward and forward; in Canaan, perfect rest in the land that God gave them. That is the difference between the life of a Christian who has, and one who has not entered into Canaan. In wandering backward and forward; going after the world, and coming back and repenting; led astray by temptation, and returning only to go off again. A life of ups and downs. In Canaan, on the other hand, a life of rest, because the soul has learned to trust that: "God keeps me every hour in His mighty power."

There is a second difference: the life in the wilderness was a life of want; in Canaan, a life of plenty. In the wilderness there was nothing to eat; and there was often no water. God graciously supplied their wants by the manna, and the water from the rock. But, alas, they were not content with this, and their life was one of want and murmurings. But in Canaan God gave them vineyards that they had not planted, and the old corn of the land was there waiting for them; a land flowing with milk and honey; a land that lived by the rain of Heaven and had the very care of God Himself. Oh, Christian, come and say to-day, "I believe there is a possibility of a complete change from this life of spiritual death, and

darkness, and sadness, and complaining, that I have often lived, into the land of the supply of my every want; where the grace of Jesus is proved sufficient every day, every hour." Say to-day: "I believe in the possibility that there is such a land of rest for me."

*Ps 23:1 **The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.***

KJV

And then, the third difference: In the wilderness there was no victory. When they tried, after they had sinned at Kadesh, to go up against their enemies, they were defeated. In the Promised Land they conquered every enemy; from Jericho onward, they went from victory to victory. And so God waits, and Christ waits, and the Holy Spirit waits, to give victory every day; not freedom from temptation; no, not that; but in union with Christ a power that can say, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." May God help every heart to say that.

2. I have not entered into God's Rest

Then comes the second step. I want you to say not only, "I believe there is such a life," but, second, "I have not had it yet." Say that. "I have never yet got that." Some may say, "I have sought it;" some may say, "I have never heard about it;" some may say, "At times I thought I had found it, but I lost it again." Let every one be honest with God.

And now, will all who have never yet found it honestly, begin to say, "Lord, up to this time I have never had it?" And why is it of such consequence to speak thus? Because, dear friends, some people want to glide into this life of rest gradually; and just quietly to steal in; and God won't have it. Your life in the wilderness has not only been a life of sadness to yourself, but of sin and dishonor to God. Every deeper entrance into salvation must always be by the way of conviction *of sin* and confession *of truth*.

Therefore, let every Christian be willing to say: "I have not lived that life, and I am guilty; I have dishonored God; I have been like Israel and provoked Him to wrath by my unbelief and disobedience. God have mercy upon me!" Oh, let it go up before God, the secret confession: "I haven't done it; alas! I have not glorified God by a life in the land of rest."

3. This life of Rest is for me

Then comes the third word I want you to speak and that is: "Thank God, that life is for me." Some say, "I believe there is such a life, but not for me." There are people who continually say: "Oh, my character is so unstable; my will is naturally very weak; my temperament is nervous and unsuitable, it is impossible for me always to live without worry, resting in God."

Beloved, do not say that. You say so only for one reason: You do not know what your God will do for you. Do begin to look away from self, and to look up to God, Take that precious word: "**He brought us out that he might bring us in.**" The God who took them through the Red Sea was the same God who took them through Jordan into Canaan.

The God who converted you is the God who is able to give you every day this blessed life. Oh, begin to say, with the beginnings of a feeble faith, even before you claim it, begin even intellectually to say: "It is for me; I do believe that. God does not disinherit any of His children. What He gives is for every one. I believe that blessed life is waiting for me. It is

meant for me. God is waiting to bestow it, and to work it in me. Glory be to His blessed name! My soul says it is for me, too." Oh, take that little word "me," and looking up in the very face of God dare to say: "This inestimable treasure--it is for me, the weakest and the unworthiest; it is for me." Have you said that? Say it now: "This life is possible to me, too."

4. This life of Rest comes from God

And then comes the next step, and that is: "I can never, by any effort of mine, grasp it; it is God must bestow it on me." I want you to be very bold in saying, "It is for me." But then I want you to fall down very low and say, "I cannot seize it; I cannot take it to myself." And how can you then get it? Praise God, if once He has brought you down in the consciousness of utter helplessness and self-despair, then comes the time that He can draw near and ask you, "Will you trust your God to work this in you?" Dearly beloved Christians, say in your heart: "I never, by any self effort, can force this from God, or seize this for myself; it is God who must give it." Cherish this blessed weakness. It is He who brought us out, who Himself must bring us in. It is your greatest happiness to be weak.

Pray that God by the Holy Spirit will reveal to you that only when you know your weakness can you receive God's strength (2 Cor 12:10), and that will open the way for your faith to say, "Lord, You must do it, or it will never be done." God will do it. People wonder, when they hear so many sermons about faith, and such earnest pleading to believe, and ask why it is they cannot believe. There is just one answer: It is self. Self is working; is trying; is struggling, and self must fail. But when you come to the end of self and can only cry, "Lord, help me! Lord, help me!" - then the deliverance is near; believe that. It was God who brought the people in. It is God who will bring you in.

Heb 4:10 For anyone who enters God's rest also ceases from his own works... NIV

5. I am to Give up Everything for a life of Rest

You should be willing, for the sake of this rest, to give up everything. The grace of God is very free. It is given without money and without price. And yet Jesus said that every man who wants the pearl of great price must sacrifice his all, must sell all that he has to buy that pearl. It is not enough to see the beauty, the attractiveness and the glory, and almost to taste the gladness and the joy of this wonderful life as it has been set before you. You must become the possessor, the owner of the field. The man who found the field with its treasure, and the man who found the great pearl, were both glad; but they had not yet got it. They had found it, seen it, desired it, rejoiced in it; but they had not yet got it. Not until they went and sold all, gave up everything, and bought the ground, and bought the pearl.

Ah, friends, there is a great deal that has to be given up: the world, its pleasures, its favor, its good opinion. You are to stand to the world in the same relation as Jesus did. The world rejected Him, and cast Him out, and you are to take up the position of your Lord, to whom you belong, and to follow the rejected Christ. You have to give up everything. You have to give up all that is good in yourself and to be humbled in the dust of death. And that is not all. Your past Christian life and experience and successes--you have to give it all up and become nothing, that God alone may have the glory. God has

brought you out in conversion; it was God's own life He gave you: but you defiled it with disobedience and unbelief.

1 Cor 4:7 ...What do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Give it all up. Give up all your own wisdom, and your own thoughts about God's work. How hard it is for the minister of the Gospel to give up all his wisdom, and to lay it at the feet of Jesus, to become a fool and to say: "Lord, I know nothing as I should know it. I have been preaching the Gospel, and how little I have seen of the glory of the blessed spiritual Promised Land, and the blessed life, abiding, resting and trusting in Christ"

Why is it that the blessed Spirit cannot teach us more effectively? No reason but this: man's own intelligence prevents it; his own wisdom prevents the light of God from shining in. So I say concerning other things; give all up. Some may have an individual sin to give up. There may be a Christian man who is angry with his brother. There may be a Christian woman who has quarreled with her neighbor. There may be friends who are not living as they should. There may be Christians holding onto some little doubtful thing, not willing to surrender it and leave behind the whole wilderness life and lust. Oh, do take this step and say: "I am ready to give up everything to have this pearl of great price; my time, my attention, my business, I count all subordinate to this rest of God as the first thing in my life; I yield all to walk in perfect fellowship with God." You cannot get that and live every day in perfect fellowship with God, without giving up time to it. You take time for everything.

Luke 14:33 (Jesus) So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

How many hours a day has a young lady spent for years in order that she may become proficient on the piano? How many years does a young man study to fit himself for the profession of the law or medicine? Hours, and days, and weeks, and months, and years, gladly given up to perfect himself for his profession. And do you expect that Christianity is so cheap that without giving time you can find close fellowship with God? You cannot. But, oh, my brothers and sisters, the pearl of great price is worth everything. God is worth everything. Christ is worth everything. *(But He never is to the lukewarm Christian)*

Oh, come to-day, and say, "Lord, at any cost help me; I do want to live this life." And if you find it difficult to say this, and if there is a struggle within the heart, never mind; say to God, "Lord, I thought I was willing, but I see how much unwillingness there is; come and discover what the evil is still in the heart." By His grace, if you will lie at His feet and trust Him you may depend upon it, deliverance will come.

Ps 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my thoughts And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

6. I am to Give Up myself to God

Then comes the next step, and that is to say: "I do now give up myself to the holy and everlasting God, for Him to lead me into this perfect rest." Ah, friends, we must learn to meet God face to face. My sin has been against God. David felt that when he said,

"Against You, You only, have I sinned." It is God on the judgment seat whose face you will have to meet personally. It is God Himself, personally, who met you to pardon your sins. Come to-day and put yourself into the hands of the living God. God is love. God is near. God is waiting to give you His blessing. The heart of God is yearning over you. "My child," God says, "you think you are longing for rest; it is I that am longing for you, because I desire to rest in your heart as My home, as My temple." You need your God. Yes, but your God needs you, to find the full satisfaction of His Father heart in Christ, in you. Come to-day and say: "I do now give up myself to Christ. I have made the choice. I deliberately say, 'Lord God, I am the purchaser of the pearl of great price. I give up everything for it. In the name of Jesus I accept that life of perfect rest, *trusting my God for everything*'"

2 Cor 5:15 *He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

7. I now trust God in every area of my life and Rest from my own independent works

When you have said that, then add: "And now, I trust God to make it all real to me in my experience. Whether I am to live one year, or thirty years, I have heard it to-day again: 'God is Jehovah, the great I AM of the everlasting future, the eternal One; and thirty years hence is to Him just the same as now;' and that God gives Himself to me, not according to my power to hold Him, but according to my trust in His almighty power of love to hold me."

Will you trust God to-day for the future? Oh, will you look up to God in Christ Jesus once again? A thousand times you have heard, and thought, and thanked--"God has given us His Son;" but will you not to-day say, "How shall He not with Him freely give me all things, every moment and every day of my life? (*Rom 8:32*)" Say that in faith. "How shall God not be willing to keep me in the light of His countenance, in the full experience of Christ's saving power? Did God make the sun to shine so brightly, and is the light so willing to pour itself into every nook and corner where it can find entrance? And will not my God, who is love, be willing all the day to shine into this heart of mine, from morning to night, from year's end to year's end?" God is love, and longs to give Himself to us.

Oh, come, Christians, you have hitherto lived a life in your own strength. Will you not begin to-day? Will you not choose a life in which God shall be all, and in which you rest in Him for all? Will you not choose a life in which you shall say: "Oh, God, I ask, I expect, I trust You for it. I enter this day into the rest of God to let God keep me; to let God keep me every hour. I enter into the rest of God." Are you ready to say that? Be of good courage; fear not, you can trust God. He brings into rest. Listen to God's word in the Prophets once again: "Take heed, and be quiet. Fear not, neither be faint-hearted (*Isa 7:4*)." Joshua brought Israel into the land. God did it through Joshua; and Joshua is Jesus, your Jesus, who washed you in His blood; your Jesus, whom you have learned to know as a precious Savior. Trust Him to-day afresh: "O my Joshua, take me, bring me in and I will trust You, and in You, the Father." You may count upon it. He will take you and the work will be done.

Deut 6:23 *God brought me out (of Egypt, Satan's kingdom) that He might bring me in (to Canaan, His Kingdom, to abide in Christ, trusting and resting in Him alone).*