

Near To The Heart of God

by Annie Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking a deeper relationship with God, drawing from personal experiences and biblical narratives to illustrate the longing for rest and fellowship with the Lord. It highlights missed opportunities for intimacy with God, the significance of entering into God's rest through faith and obedience, and the invitation of Jesus to find rest in Him. The message conveys the transformative power of surrendering to God, finding comfort, and experiencing full release and peace near to the heart of God.

Scripture: Genesis 2:2, Hebrews 4:1, Matthew 11:28, Psalm 55:22, Philippians 4:6, 1 Peter 5:7, Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:6

Topics: "Deeper Relationship with God", "Finding Rest in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

In the early years of my Christian life, growing up at home in our church, we used to have an annual convention. Every year they would invite a special speaker and there'd be morning Bible studies and evening some devotional messages. And after I came to know the Lord, I mean, accept Jesus as my savior and wanting to know God more and more, there was a hunger in my heart.

And one particular year, there was a very godly speaker for that annual convention. And I feel that he was really anointed by the Holy Spirit because ours was a brethren church, but he spoke in a different level, that all of us had a hunger after God, after he spoke. And after every meeting, he would lead the congregation in this song, there is a place of quiet rest.

And that used to speak to me like the words were so living and the hunger in my heart grew more. It was like a little spark God had lit in my heart to know God more and more. And now, and then I think of the words of that song, and I thought of today's message, I desire to want to know God more and more.

And we can express that in prayer and in words, in songs like this. We read in Genesis 2, that God created heaven and earth and created Adam and Eve. And on the seventh day, he rested.

So that was the first day for Adam and Eve, when God was resting and they were free to do whatever they liked. And I was thinking, if Eve, instead of going towards the tempter and having a conversation with the tempter, if she had asked God, and God was the first person she ever saw, before she saw Adam, she saw God, because he created her and brought her to Adam. She could have asked God and said, God, what are you doing today? And God would have said, I am resting.

And can we join you in that rest? And we have that fellowship with you, get to know you a little better, because you're not doing anything, you're resting. And we spend some time with you, God. If Eve had done that, I wish, but unfortunately, she didn't do that.

She made the wrong choice. And she wandered off, and we know what happened. How much she could have had, if she had that fellowship with God on that day, she and Adam could have spent time and got to know him.

And we could have learned a lot. Things would have, the whole story would have been different. But thank God, God gave us another chance.

Then we read in Hebrews 4 and verses 1 to 11, and in the Old Testament, how God wanted the children of Israel to have a Sabbath rest. He wanted them to have a rest and to read the whole of that Hebrews 4 and get to know. I'm not doing a Bible study, but God's desire was that his children whom he had brought out of Egypt can have a taste of a little bit of that Sabbath rest.

But even though they left Egypt, Egypt was still in their hearts. They wanted the, they thought of the calf and the food of Egypt, and Egypt was still in their heart. So they also could not get into that rest, which God intended for them.

We read in Hebrews 4 that it was unbelief and disobedience that they could not, but Jesus hadn't come. When Jesus came into this world, then things became easier, easier for us to get into that Sabbath rest, a little more of that rest which God intended mankind to have. And Jesus said in Matthew 11 verses 28 and 29, come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and you shall find rest into your souls. So Jesus came in this earth to bring us, give us some of that rest, which God intended for us. So when I sing the song that creates in me a hunger and longing for that rest, which God wants us to have.

Let me just read the lines of this song. It was written by a godly man called Mick Effie. He lived 1866 to 1944.

There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God, a place where sin cannot molest near to the heart of God. In the old covenant, people couldn't have that. But after Jesus died for our sins and cleansed us from our sins, we can have access to that, come closer to the heart of God and forgiveness of sins.

And as we hear about in the new covenant, even victory over sin. So sin cannot molest us, cannot do any harm to us or pull us down. It's possible for us to get closer to the heart of God.

The chorus is, O Jesus, blessed redeemer, sent from the heart of God, hold us who wait before thee near to the heart of God. Jesus came from the bosom of the father, only begotten son, he said, came from the bosom of the father to bring us back to the bosom of the father. How wonderful it is.

But it's not just his death. As we have been listening, it's his life of daily taking up the cross and he wants us to take the same cross and we can get a taste of that coming back to the bosom of the father. Hold us who wait.

It's only the Lord who can hold us, who bring us to the bosom of God. Then the second verse says, there is a place of comfort sweet near to the heart of God. In this world, we face a lot of trials, sickness, problems with our work, our career, working with colleagues, our future, and we long for someone with whom we can share and we don't want to burden others, but we can come to the heart of God, come to God and get that comfort.

There is a place of comfort sweet near to the heart of God, a place where we, our savior meet near to the heart of God. It's so wonderful every day before we begin the day, we can say, Lord, let me come close to you today. Let me hear your voice.

Let me feel your presence and I can be, I can get the strength for this day. Then the third verse says, there is a place of full release near to the heart of God. That full release is when we have surrendered everything to the Lord, all our plans for the future, all our plans and ambitions, all the regrets that we had about our past, our past failures, things we couldn't do, things we did wrong.

Surrender all to the Lord, a place of full release and plans for the future for our children, burdens for our children, everything we can come and leave in the Lord's hand, close to the heart of God. There is a place of full release near to the heart of God, a place where all is joy and peace. When we have surrendered everything to the Lord, then there's only joy and peace for us.

No more burdens to carry because Jesus is taking care of all our burdens and we can leave with them and we can enjoy that sacred presence and that sacred joy and peace with him. May the Lord bless each one of us as we heard today to bring us closer to him and get to know him better and find that quiet rest every day of our lives.

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