

Day 222, Hebrews 4

by David Servant

The author of Hebrews warns his readers to be diligent to enter God's rest, which is only possible by not hardening their hearts and believing the good news.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:8

Topics: "Faith And Rest", "Spiritual Obedience"

Description

David Servant preaches on the importance of entering God's rest as highlighted in Hebrews, emphasizing the need to not harden our hearts like the Israelites in the wilderness who failed to enter God's rest due to unbelief. The promise of entering God's rest extends beyond the physical rest in Canaan to a spiritual rest that believers can experience by faith. The author of Hebrews connects God's rest to the concept of resting from our works, indicating that righteousness and eternal life are not earned through rituals but through faith in Christ. Believers are urged to be diligent in obedience to avoid falling into disobedience and to hold fast to their confession of faith in Christ.

Transcript

Citing truth from the old covenant Scriptures, the author of Hebrews once again focuses on his greatest concern---that his readers might ultimately fall short of "entering God's rest." As in the previous chapter, he again references Psalm 95:7-11, where God said:

Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, "They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways"; as I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest" (Heb. 3:7-11).

Psalm 95 was written hundreds of years after Israel's conquest of Canaan, and so the author argues that it speaks of a different "rest" than that which was enjoyed by the generation of Israelites who entered the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership (4:8). He also points out that God speaks in Psalm 95 of entering His own rest, which can only be the rest that He took on the seventh day of creation, as there is mention of no other rest by God in Scripture. Thus we have in Psalm 95 a promise that remains for us to enter "God's rest," of which some Israelites enjoyed only as a foreshadow in Canaan. But just as in the case of their rest in Canaan, God's rest is only enjoyed by those who "do not harden their hearts," and who believe the good news. The Israelites in Joshua's day who did not believe failed to enter Canaan's land. So those who refuse to believe the gospel fail to enter God's rest now.

The author takes his analogy one step further by mentioning that on the seventh day of creation, Scripture says that God rested from all His works. So he writes that those who enter into God's rest have also rested from their works (4:10), an obvious reference to the attempt of so many Jews to gain righteousness and eternal life by their limited keeping of the ceremonial and ritualistic aspects of the Mosaic Law. The author could not have been endorsing the idea that those who believe have rested from making any attempt to keep the moral teachings of the Mosaic Law, as those same moral teachings are contained in the Law of Christ, and the author later wrote in this same letter, "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification [or "holiness"] without which no one will see the Lord" (12:14).

So we are admonished to "be diligent to enter that rest," and clearly obedience is part of the package, as the author goes on to say, "...lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience" (4:11). Moreover, he continues in the very next two verses writing that God's Word is sharper than any sword, as it pierces deep inside us and judges our thoughts and motives. We can hide nothing from the Lord.

Again we plainly see that the author was not writing to Jews who were considering becoming Christians, but to Jews who had already professed faith in Christ. If that was not the case, he would not have written, "Let us hold fast our confession" (4:14). His readers had already made their confession of faith in Christ, and now needed only to "hold fast" to it. The only reason any commentator on the book of Hebrews would maintain that the author was writing to Jews who were not yet Christians is to prevent the false doctrine of unconditional eternal security, also known as "once-saved-always-saved," from crashing down. If saved people can't forfeit salvation under any circumstances, that begs the question, "Why did the author of Hebrews so often warn his Christian readership of the danger of ultimately forfeiting salvation?" So they go to great lengths to prove that the intended readers were not yet believers.

Believing Jews no longer needed an earthly high priest, as they had a superior, new and heavenly high priest who is full of compassion and grace. More on that in the next chapter.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/day-222-hebrews-4/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net