

Entered Into God's Rest

by R. Edward Miller

The sermon explores the superiority of Jesus and the importance of faith in achieving true rest in God.

Duration: 39:00

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 7:14 - 8:1, Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11

Topics: "Rest Of God", "Rest in Christ", "Faith vs. Works"

Description

R. Edward Miller emphasizes the superiority of Jesus Christ over Moses and the law, illustrating that while the law provided a framework for living, it did not offer true rest. He explains that true rest comes from faith in Christ, who invites us to cease from our own works and find peace within. Miller highlights the struggles of a restless generation, burdened by fears and anxieties, and contrasts this with the inner rest that Jesus promises to those who believe. He encourages listeners to embrace the rest that God offers, which is not dependent on external circumstances but rooted in faith and acceptance of God's will. Ultimately, Miller calls for a deeper understanding of God's rest, urging believers to let go of their striving and trust in Christ's finished work.

Transcript

I chose to share with you the book of Hebrews, third chapter, and what Paul the writer is trying to establish is the superiority of Jesus Christ, first in all the heaven and his equality with God over all the angels, and then his superiority over men, and then his, because of his superiority, because of his greatness, the very co-equal with God, the atonement and the redemption of mankind, and then he came to Moses. What a wonderful man he was. I don't think in all history there's an equal to the intellectualism, to the depth of his nature.

He was able to write a code of laws that's not been changed for 4,000 years, it's been added to, but it hasn't been taken from, and establish a nation, establish a way of law. It is not wrong to say it was a gospel of Moses, because light was in that law, and gospel means, the word gospel means good news. Moses brought good news to the world that there was a way of living that you didn't have to kill everybody, everyone that you disagreed with, because up to that time there was not the rule of law, and when there is not the rule of law, life is pretty precarious, but he brought in the rule of law, and established a nation, and a people that are still with us, and still being governed by that law.

Moses was a wonderful man, there is no doubt about it, perhaps the greatest, as I said before, that earth has ever produced. Nevertheless, the scriptures go to show us that Jesus Christ was superior, and greatly

superior to Jesus Christ, superior to Moses, I should say. And because of that, they call it the gospel of Moses, he brought the light, the way of living, for nations could live in peace, and in harmony.

But then the chapter goes on, and we find the next thing that Paul the writer goes to, it's very interesting, because it's sort of an insert this chapter is, he goes into the rest of God. In other words, the law didn't bring the rest. Law brought the knowledge of how to live, how a nation can live, and stay solid, and have people that can live together, but it didn't bring rest.

And so we're going to read now in Hebrews the third chapter, and the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth verses. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost says, today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the saw my works forty years, and I was grieved with that generation, said they do always err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways. Now that is very interesting, that last phrase, they've not known my ways.

They knew his law, but they still hadn't reached through beyond the law, they hadn't seen that the right of the law was more than the law. They hadn't seen that the one that brought forth the way we can live together in peace, and harmony, and rest, and prosperity, that they hadn't seen that he was more than just a law. He was more than just a series of what to do, what not to do.

But we're going to go on now in chapter three, and verse eighteen, and here he's introducing something else. And to these people that they had not known his ways, he swore that they should never not enter into his rest, that they should not enter into his rest. And then we go to verse nineteen, so we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being lest us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. And we're going on into verse four, and chapter four, verse two. For unto us was a gospel priest as well as unto them, but the word priest did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Verse three, for we which have believed do enter into rest. We which have believed do enter into rest. As he said, I have sworn my wrath, they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

In verse four, for he spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, God did rest the seventh day from all his works. In this place again, if they shall enter into my rest, seeing therefore, it remains that some must enter therein. And they to whom it was first priest entered not in because of unbelief.

Again, he limits a certain day saying in David today, after so long a time, as it is said today, if you'll hear his voice, harden not your hearts, for Joshua had given them rest, they would not afterwards have spoken of another rest. There remains, therefore, a rest to the people of God. For he that has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own work as God did from his.

Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Rest, rest, rest. That was the burden of Paul as he spoke of the rest that the gospel brings through faith.

We enter into that rest through faith. Perhaps to some people it doesn't appear such a great word, such an important thing. Nevertheless, it's been many times in my life, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised many times in your life, but there's only one thing you wanted, and that's a good bed.

Not even food contents you. Just let me find a place to lie down and sleep. Rest.

Rest is a wonderful word. Actually, it is used in the New Testament, in the first four, first five books, not, but after that, all the writers of the New Testament lose the word rest in place of the word Sabbath. In other words, a whole time of rest, not just a day, not just a minute, not just a night, but a life.

The Sabbath is a plural word of rest, where you just rest. You know, we are a very restless generation. We are very restless.

If you don't think so, go stand in the Hartsfield Airport down here on one of their busy days and look out you don't get run over. It's everybody rushing here and rushing there, rushing to do this and rushing to this to do something else. We are very restless, but the problem is that the restlessness is inside as well as outside.

God is talking about an inside rest. He's talking where all the strivings and the things that hinder our rest, but you see, under the rule of law, under the rule of works, let me put it that way, under the rule of works, they did not enter into rest. All that time, as we read just now in the scripture, all that time, the people of God had not entered into rest.

Well, I'm sure they had beds. I'm sure they slept every night. I'm sure that they kept the Sabbath because that was religious for them.

They kept that so completely, so totally, in such minutia that they put everybody else to shame, but nevertheless, God said, but you haven't entered into rest. They haven't entered into rest. Isn't that a strange way of speaking? He says, you haven't known my ways.

My ways are to bring you into rest, but he said, you haven't found that rest. Well, then what's he talking about? I'm sure their beds were as good as ours. I've slept in beds in Israel and in Judah and Galilee and so on, and I can't complain.

Maybe I like mine just a little bit better, but I've been a lot worse once. I'm sure they could sleep well. I'm sure that they didn't have any trouble, and yet, and yet, yet, he says, but you haven't found rest.

You haven't found rest. You see, rest comes from inside. We have a word stress, stress, and that's an inside word, isn't it? It's not what's outside.

It's our reaction to the outside. It's not our environment. It's our reaction to our environment.

We get stressed out. There's no rest. I don't care if you sleep at night and if you have to take a sleeping pill and sleep at night, but there's no rest because the inside is not rested, and under the rule of works, there couldn't be any real rest.

The way of worship, the rules of worship were so, how should I say, exact and so minute and covering every single thing, whether you raised this finger or that finger or did it this way or did it that way, they couldn't even come to worship and be at rest. Now, what do I do now? Did I do that wrong? I've been in strange churches. I've been in several times.

I was thinking, I'm thinking right now, I went to a Catholic church, and I confess, I didn't know what to do next. I think it's about time to kneel down. They'd all get up, and when I was standing up tall and straight like a sore thumb in the middle of a restroom, they all went down.

Well, I said, well, I better get down. I got down, and they got up, and I didn't quite know what to do next. It was all covered, everything they had to do, this way, this way, this way, everything they did.

All their worship, it was quite extensive, but it all had to be done just the right way. Their worship was totally controlled. Their daily living, how they scoured a pan, how they cleaned a cup, and Jesus said, you didn't do it right, you got the outside, you forgot to wash the inside.

Oh, dear. How can you go to church and rest when you've got to be so careful with everything you do? How can you go home and rest when the works, when the law tells you, you've got to do it this way, and you've got to do it this way, or you didn't sweep that floor right? Oh, dear. My first job when I went to Bible school many years ago, my first job was washing a woman's windows.

I mean the windows of her house. Correction. I never saw a more picky person in my life.

She could find one little spot of lint where I couldn't see it with my my eyes, and they were pretty good. And she was demanding there must not be one tiny flake of lint on that window before she would okay it. I'll tell you one thing, I didn't rest on that job.

When you had to be so particular, when everything is controlled, or you break the law. No, I can see why, I can see why the law didn't bring rest. How could it? Everything, your daily work, and especially the Sabbath day, supposed to be a day of rest.

I mean, you had to count your steps, unless you step too many steps on the Sabbath day. Even today, mind you, I was in a hotel in Israel, and talking to the manager, and he was complaining because they almost lost their kosher license, meaning that Israeli people couldn't stay there. It wasn't kosher, it wasn't acceptable Jewish.

And the reason was, in the elevator, they had push buttons. That's work, and you couldn't stay there on Sunday, and you have to push a button to get your room. So, they solved the problem by taking out all the push buttons, and put in touch buttons.

So, all you had to do is touch it. That was acceptable. So, they kept their license.

No, that was true. It's amazing. It's amazing.

Anything was work. They do have ways of getting around things. For instance, you cannot buy a meal in a Jewish hotel on the Sabbath day, because that's exchange, that's buying and selling.

You can't do that. But what you can do on the day before the Sabbath, you can buy a coupon. And then, on the Sabbath, you can hand the coupon in.

That's not money. And get your meal. That's pretty smart.

But what a way to live. I'm going to be so careful. Yes, I can see why under the law, there was no rest.

And then, the only way you got to paradise, if you got there, was keeping all that law. And Paul said, he had kept it. He had kept it completely.

And that's a big statement. He said, no one can find fault in my life. Poor man, to live under that.

Now, he's the one that's writing about, there is a rest. There is a rest. Not by works.

There's something else. They never entered into rest, not really because they couldn't keep the law. They couldn't.

But because they didn't believe. There was a total lack of faith in what they were doing. They were just doing it because they had to do it.

And furthermore, furthermore, the law had its penalties. I mean, there was no mercy in that law. An eye for an eye and tooth for tooth, that was a basis.

No mercy. You kept that law or else. You did what Moses told you to do or else.

And that else wasn't very nice. No wonder, he said, there remains a rest. The people of God did not find a rest.

They did not find it at all. There's things that disturb our rest. One reason we cannot rest are the fears that torment us.

Fear of what might happen. Fear of losing a job. Fear of sickness.

I look at some of the ads I get in the mail or some that I get in the television, and my goodness, all they do is play on people's fears. And they make fortunes playing on people's fears. There's no rest there.

When a fear is tormenting you, there's no rest, that's for sure. And habits and lusting for things. You go into a mall on a good shopping day, you're not going to find rest there.

Rushing here and there to buy something, to have something, to acquire something. When I first came up from Argentina several years ago, I used to like to go through a mall and buy nothing. Not even five cents worth of gum.

No, nothing. Because I got so irked, I got so disgusted with, everything was there appealing, said buy me, buy me, buy me, buy me. And I got said, I won't buy any of you.

They were just shouting at me, you can't live without me. You need this, I'll help you here, I'll help you there, buy me. I'd walk out of that thing, I'd walk all through it on purpose, buy nothing.

Plain defiance. A lot of you'd be richer today if you'd done that on before Christmas. We can't rest.

We can't rest. People can't rest because of anger. They've been injured, or they've been hurt, and it's gone deep.

And that anger turns to bitterness, and they can't rest. They can't rest. Or some people just out of guilt, or the sense of failure.

Out of anxieties, out of things that have to be done tomorrow. There's so many things. We don't enter into rest.

We're a restless people. We're very restless. We haven't learned how to rest either.

Over in Romans 7, 13. We're going to read a portion. We'll read up to chapter 8. Well, then that which is good may death unto me, God forbid, but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am, what? Spiritual? No, no, wait a minute, wait a minute. We know that the law is spiritual, but I am, that's a misreading there, but I'll read it anyway, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not.

For what I would, that do I not. But what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent to the law, that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing. For the will is present in me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not.

But the evil which I would not do, that I do. Now if I do that, I would not. It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Verse 21, I find in a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

Paul at last found an answer. After struggling and struggling and struggling, we all have that struggle. The habits come upon us, we get into a mood, a bad mood, we get discouraged, and we do the things we wish we never had.

We say the things we wish we had never said. It's there. We all fall into it.

How can we ever get to paradise if we can't keep the law, if we can't do the right works? But he ends up by saying, wretched man that I am. But it doesn't end. That's the end of that chapter.

But he starts another chapter. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. And back to Hebrews 4, 6, seeing therefore it remains that some must enter into rest, and they to whom it was first preached entered not because of unbelief.

Will you turn with me to Matthew 11, 28? Rest are the most beautiful words in the language that we speak. Matthew 11, 28. Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, learn of me, learn of me. I am weak and lowly in heart, and you'll find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Learn of me, I am weak and lowly, and you'll find rest to your souls. That is the inner rest.

That's the inside rest. That's when the man that's in you, the inner man, is not all stressed out. Whether you sleep or don't sleep, there's a rest within.

And I read one more scripture in Matthew chapter 12, verse 1. At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn. Disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears of corn and to eat. Wait a minute.

Now that's a Sabbath day. That's a day of rest. And Jesus was working.

What do you know about that? He was walking through the corn. And you couldn't walk that way on the Sabbath day. You had measured out so many steps you could take on the Sabbath day, and that's all.

He was walking through the fields with his disciples on the Sabbath day. And furthermore, they were hungry, so they reached out and got some corn and took the husks off of it and ate it. You can do that.

I've done it many times. You see, he wasn't talking about outside rest. He was talking about inside rest.

And when they chided him, he said, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. He wasn't trying to keep all those laws. He was at rest within.

He said, learn of me. Learn of me, and you'll find rest. Learn what it means.

Learn meekness. Learn lowliness. Find meek and lowly of heart.

Learn that. Meekness, if you want a definition, it has two that I know of. One is controlled strength.

A person is strong but doesn't use his strength only when he needs it. But the other meaning is the man that has no conflict with his environment or his circumstances. He's at rest.

He is in meekness. He is not fighting his boss. He's not fighting his job.

He's not fighting this or that or something else. He accepts it as it is. I don't want to connect these two, but let me give you an illustration.

The animals have found rest. They are never stressed out. They live just one hour at a time.

What they have to do, they do it. And as soon as it's over, down they go. A man and his dog are out walking.

They meet somebody. The dog has been running here and running here and chasing, finding all the bunny smells and all the things he can find. And then they meet somebody, and his master stops to talk.

And he's up talking and gestulating, talking, and the dog is sleeping. And he stays there till his master goes on. If it's an hour, he's got a good hour rest.

He's not stressed out. He's not worried about what's going to happen. He's not worried about what's coming.

He's not worried about even what's past. He just lives now. And you know, that's all we can live anyway, really.

Whatever we fear, I don't know about you, but I fear at least 10,000 things that never came to pass. Have you? Oh, maybe only 8,000. We haven't learned to rest, because we're at war with our circumstances and our environment.

We have not learned the rest of Christ. He said, walk with me. Take my yoke.

Yoke binds you together. See, take my yoke upon you. Walk with me, and you'll find rest.

That inner rest. If you're yoked with somebody, and they stop, I'll tell you something, you are going to stop also. Unless you're a lot bigger than he is.

And in this case, we're not. And when he goes, you're going to go also, when we're yoked together. He said, take my yoke.

It's easy. He said, and then you'll find rest to your souls. What the law couldn't give, Jesus Christ gives.

He said, come unto me. All you that labor, every day, and I will give you rest. He said, learn of me.

Take my yoke. I am meek and lowly in heart, and you'll find rest to your soul. And lowliness, incidentally, means that you've learned to accept your station in life.

You don't fight to be somebody better than you are, and climb. I'm not speaking about the ordinary climbing of any young person that moves on into his career, whatever it may be. But I'm talking about the person that inside resents the fact that he cannot be like somebody else, or have somebody else, or somebody else other station.

He's fighting his position. It would be like this. An angel, a lovely little angel, has only two wings.

But he's a sweet little fellow. But he's sitting there, and he's crying, and crying, and crying. And you go up to that angel, and say, well, what's the matter, little angel? Oh, he says, I'm all stressed out.

Well, what's the matter? Why? He said, can't you see why? No, I see everything beautiful. I've only got two wings. Well, but look, he's got four wings.

And that cherubim got six wings. Well, well, I've tried and tried to make my other wings grow. They never grow.

He's all stressed out. Lowliness. I am what I am.

And I don't try to be what somebody else is. So learn that one. And then you'll get that inner rest.

There is a rest to the people of God. And Paul, in the book of Hebrews, stops right here, before he goes any further, and says, look, there is a rest where we cease from our own labors. We cease from striving.

We cease from works. We stop doing our own works. We do his works and let him take care of it.

And if it works this way, fine. If it works that way, fine. Many, many years ago, in a place where God was dwelling in a glorious way, and the Spirit of God was there for years, they taught this.

One of the greatest prayers you can pray is, Lord, get your perfect will done, and I'll be happy with it. Get your perfect will done. Nothing could be better than that.

We get all stressed out. We get frustrated. You know what frustration really is? It's a form of rebellion.

Did you know that? I want to do something and I can't get it done. My will is frustrated. And if I let it, it will take all the rest out of my soul.

And I'll get all upset with things, and upset with people, and upset with circumstances, because I cannot fulfill my desire. There is a rest to the people of God. There is a rest.

And he said, he warns them, he said that to take heed, he said, don't be like those in the provocation, he said, that entered not into his rest because of their unbelief, because the Canaan land should have been a rest for them, but it wasn't. They got all tangled up with their various religions. They got all mixed up and frustrated.

He said, don't be like that. Don't harden your hearts. He said, hearken.

Today, if you hear his voice, enter into that rest of God. Till your heart, and your mind, and your soul, and your body are at rest. There is a rest.

God has provided it. There is a Sabbath. There is a real rest.

Not by works. We cease from our labors. We might be busy, but it's his business, not ours.

And we take the day as God gives it to us. We don't let it fret us. We don't let it frighten us.

The things that happen, if I'm yoked with him, I'm walking with him, he's taking care of things. I talked to a lawyer in Argentina one time. He was an atheist.

In fact, he was a communist. Very much a communist. He even made the statement that if communism asked him to kill his own mother, he would do so.

And we were talking to him, and he made this statement. He said, you, as a Christian, you don't know how lucky you are. I said, why? He said, because if anything goes wrong with what I'm doing, my work or anything, he said, I've got to carry all the responsibility.

It's my fault. He said, you're going along, and anything happens, you say, all right, God, that's your business. You did that.

He said, I don't want anyone to blame. It's all on me. He said, when things go right, you say, oh, thank you, Jesus.

He worked it out for me. He said, I've got nobody to thank. So I worked it out.

I worked it out myself. It's no good to stand around and say how good you are to yourself. He says, you don't know how lucky you are.

I think he had a point. You take care of it, Lord. I don't know how to take care of this.

So you take care of it. And I go into rest. I let it go.

Let him work it out. All things work together for good. There is a rest to the people of God.

And when you find people that are all restless and uptight and stressed and fearful, something's happened to their faith. Something's happened to take them away from that simplicity that there is in Jesus Christ. Until we have that simplicity of faith.

And simplicity doesn't mean stupid. It means wise. It means we accept our limitations.

We're just men. We have no idea what's going to happen in the next 15 minutes. We have very little memory of the past.

We're just human creatures, just little people, all of us, regardless of how much we may have studied or what degrees we may have or what our job is or how much we earn. We're still just flesh and blood. But there is a rest for the people of God.

Father, I pray that you'll give us the wisdom and the understanding to enter into the rest of God. We need it. We need it very much.

We need to know that you've finished the work. We don't have to do it. You ask us to believe.

We're justified by faith, not by works. That's not the way it goes. And you want us, Lord, to enter into that rest.

You want us to find that place. I ask, Father, in your lovely name, that you'll take us into that rest. Let us learn meekness.

Let us learn lowliness. Let us learn there is a rest that you brought from Jesus Christ, that you will give us the rest and have that rest on the inside. So all the restlessness is gone and all the fears that drive us and drive us and drive us are put to rest and they can't drive us any longer.

Father, I pray that for this congregation here tonight. The gift of rest to the weary, anxious, to the fearful, to the worrying ones.

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