

The Road That Leads to Rest

by Rick Leibee

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and surrender in entering into God's promised rest, contrasting it with the aimlessness of a wilderness experience.

Duration: 1:03:35

Scripture: Galatians 5:6, Hebrews 4:7, Hebrews 4:11-16

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the children of Israel in the book of Numbers. He highlights the importance of belief and faith in God's promises. The preacher emphasizes that some Christians are stuck in a spiritual wilderness, lacking the fullness of God's blessings. He encourages listeners to have a faith like Caleb, who believed wholeheartedly in God's promises and was able to claim his inheritance.

Transcript

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This is the day that the Lord has made. And so it's a perfect day. Amen.

And God has something for you today, I trust, in His Word. Got up early this morning. Been praying about this message a little bit and this passage of Scripture.

Just feel like that there's some things here that would apply to a number of you. So, though this is a Bible study, I trust it will also be not just an inspiration, but a challenge and perhaps even convicting to some of your hearts here today. So, turn in your Bibles to Hebrews.

And as we said yesterday, we'll begin here in verse 7. A very important passage in the New Testament. Quite a few verses here that really go over a similar principle. But it's such an important principle that the writer of Hebrews repeats himself many times it seems like until you almost say, okay, I think I've got it.

But the problem is God knows us and we don't always get it, do we? We need to hear it again and again because we're leaky vessels. So, let's just receive what God has for us here and realize that this is something very important. And how many of you read this passage as I asked yesterday? Good.

Okay, well that's way over half. Well, I would just say as I begin and I'm going to read some of this here, there is undoubtedly different applications we could make from this passage of Scripture and different types of people and situations that it could speak into. And that's the wonderful thing about the Word of God is you can take one verse and maybe preach 50 messages on it and they're all right and they're all true.

Isn't that amazing what a treasure trust there is in the Word of God and so many different gems and jewels that can be plumbed and used out of that. But today, I'm going to probably direct most of my applications or most of my comments to two groups of people that I know are sitting in this room. And as we read about these people that struggled with unbelief and therefore could not enter into God's rest, again, we could make different applications.

Who are those people? We know who they are historically, but the question today is why is He writing this to the church? Because this is to brethren. And if it's to brethren, it's to you and you and you and me and all of us sitting here, right? And so the question is what is the application? What is God saying to you? Who is He talking to? Me? You? And what groups of people? And so today, I'm going to principally narrow the field a little bit to two groups of people as we read this. The first group as we read these passages would be those that struggle with assurance of salvation.

Those that struggle with assurance of salvation. Now, I'm not going to say this passage has all the answers for those that may be struggling with assurance, but it has the fundamental answer. It has the bottom line answer that needs to be settled in your heart.

And I know some of you here struggle with that, don't you? It's something that does happen from time to time. The other group of people I believe is a larger group of people that are sitting here and that is that group of people who are not, how would I say it, are not fully surrendered. They are not living the abundant, rejoicing Christian life.

They do not have rivers of living water flowing out of their bellies. Born again? Yes. Okay.

I've been delivered by the blood of Jesus and here I am. I've said goodbye to Egypt. But you live in this what I call wilderness experience.

You're in a place of sort of aimlessness. It's a desert. It's a dry place.

Why am I not yielded to God the way I need to be? Why are all these blessings, why are all these promises in the Word of God, why am I not able to apprehend them and appropriate them and use them in my life? What is wrong? Why is my Christian life kind of just flat? You know? And so that group of people that is not fully surrendered, fully yielded, fully surrendered, is the group, second class of people, that we want to make some applications here today. So as I read this, if you're in either one of those two classes, I would just ask you to be honest with God as we read this and allow God to speak to your heart because I

know that's why you're here. And this passage mentions the word heart several times because God isn't just interested in performance.

He isn't interested in, you know, where you go to church or where you go to church. He's going to be talking about heart issues and a very, very important heart issue. And that has to do with your faith or your unbelief, as is going to be taught here.

So let me read a few of these verses here to get started. We'll begin in verse 7. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, today... Can we just stop there? What is today? Today. You know, this isn't for you to think about and get a hold of a year from now, OK? It isn't for you to sit here in condemnation and think, well, I didn't get it last year.

Let last year in last year, OK? Today. Let's deal with where your heart is today. There is a sense of urgency here in the Word of God that you get something, that you hear something from the Holy Ghost today.

Today. Can you just wake yourself up and see today if you will hear His voice? Heart and not sure. And here's that word hearts.

This is a heart thing that we're dealing with. Intellectually, I'm glad if you understand some things today. But more importantly, I agree with the Holy Ghost today.

I want your heart to receive it and understand it. That's what God wants. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years.

Wherefore, I was grieved. This is God speaking here so that you understand what's happening. God was grieved.

I was grieved with that generation and said, they do always err in their heart. God sees with a vision that you and I don't see, doesn't He? He can not only observe the way you live your life, He can actually see into your heart. You know, He can just lay that thing open to His eyes and He'll see what is in your heart.

You know, your best friend may not know. You may have them fooled. But God knows because He sees your heart.

They do always err in their heart and they have not known My ways. These are strong words, aren't they? Very strong words here. And you want to think, why is He writing this to a group of believers? But that's who He's writing it to.

This is not a message that He's preaching on the corner to a lost world. We need to understand the context of who He's speaking to here. So I swear, now God is allowed to swear.

You and I are not. You know why God can? Because He can swear by Himself and there's nothing higher than that. You understand that? So He can do that.

He's taking an oath here. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest. Now the word rest here is going to be used 11 times in the passage through the end of chapter 3 and all of chapter 4. And I recognize and I don't have time to talk about all of this, but the word rest is used in different ways in the New Testament.

And there's several different applications we could use. Today, that rest, again, that He's going to be talking about, Canaan, is not heaven. It's not heaven.

I'm not going to use Canaan as heaven. Some people may preach it that way. I'm not necessarily going to debate with them.

I don't think that's the best way to make the application of this passage. The rest here, I think the better rest here is those that are leading that Christian life of faith and surrender and they're yielded to whatever God has for them and they find that abundant, blessing Christian life with fruit, just like the land of Canaan was full of fruit, full of fruit and growth and everything they touch is going to flourish and their life is going to bless other people. And all those things that should have happened to them had they entered into Canaan land but didn't are the example of the application I'm making is there is a rest in the Christian life where you're totally surrendered, totally yielded, full of faith, and the promises of God you lay hold of them, and may I say they lay hold of you, and your life is like your path is gold.

That's the rest that I'm going to use here and I believe is, for me at any rate, the best understanding of this passage that we're talking about here. Take heed, brethren, and again, note the word brethren. This is you.

Most of you sitting here are born again. I do believe there's probably some of you sitting here in a group this size that are not born again. And so this message is not necessarily to you and yet it is to you because you can make an application here too.

And you need to listen to the Word of God. But the warning here, this is the second major warning in the book of Hebrews. There's seven major warnings.

There's many others, but there's seven major warnings in the book of Hebrews. This is the second one and it's a sobering one and it's a serious one. Remember the first one was, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? Well, here's the second one and it's specifically addressed to brethren.

Take heed, and that word heed is a word again of warning, danger, wake up. This could cause a major problem in your life. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart.

It's dealing with your heart again. An evil heart. Where is your heart today, young people? An evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

Now, I think I'll stop there just for a moment to set the framework of this a little bit in our minds for the purposes of what God wants to show us here today. And I think we should just turn to Numbers, chapter 13 and 14. If we understand what happened, and maybe we should just turn there quickly, turn to Numbers chapters.

We'll just read a few verses out of Numbers 13 and 14. What God is talking about here is with the children of Israel. Well, let's back up to Egypt just for a moment.

They were in slavery. They were in bondage there for 400 years. They sighed.

They cried. And God heard their cry up in heaven. And He sent a Redeemer, Moses, to lead them out of the bondage.

And they were let out through blood. The blood was put on the doorposts of the lentils of their house. And by faith, they had to believe that God meant what He said.

And they were to stay inside and rest in God's Word that if they did what He said by staying where He said in their house with the blood on the door, that the death angel would pass over them. And that first Passover was a wondrous thing. It was a wonderful thing, but of course it's only a shadow or a type of Jesus Christ, our great Passover.

Through His blood, God passes over our sins. So by faith, they had to stay in their houses that night when there were screams of agony and death all over Egypt in animals and in men. And so through that deliverance of blood, they were then let out with the flame by night and the cloud by day.

They were delivered through the Red Sea. They saw God do a mighty victory. They sang the song of Moses and Miriam that God delivered them.

It was a wonderful thing. So they had, may I say, a rest of redemption in that they were redeemed out of that Egypt, which is a type of the world and a type of sin and flesh and all of those things that they were in bondage to it and captive to it. They couldn't even live their life the way they wanted to live it.

It was affecting their children. It was affecting all parts of their life. And so God delivered them from that and they were free to worship Him.

Remember, that was one of the cries Moses gave them is so that they would be free to worship God. And so now they're free to worship God. So they go through that.

They go to Mount Sinai and they get close to Canaan. They get close to the promised land, the fulfillment of what else God has promised them. They're free.

That should be enough, right? No, God has more for them than just deliverance, than just redemption. He has a life that He wants them to live. He has a way that He wants them to live.

He wants to make His name famous. And He needs a people that will be dedicated to Him and love Him and have faith in Him that they'll go and they'll win victories for Him. They'll fight battles for Him.

All of these things. And so that's what Canaan was supposed to be. And here they are on the precipice of Canaan.

They're ready to go into the promised land so that they can be a nation of priests. So that they can be a sign to the Gentiles and a light to the world. And Canaan land is part of that promise and fulfillment.

And they get there and they get scared. You know. After all the signs and wonders, you know.

But really, we're just like them, aren't we? We're like them. And that's what this passage in the New Testament is about. It's not for us to judge them.

Don't ever sit in judgment of what the Israelites did. Because those things are written for examples to us. And may I say, those things are written as examples of what we're like.

Can I say that too? And that's why they're there. And that's why God put this in the book of Hebrews. And so they come to this point of rest.

They come to this place where they could have all these things. But they say, oh Moses, we better send some spies in there. We're not sure about all this.

And they murmur and they complain and they grumble. And this isn't the first time they grumbled and murmured. And God counts, by the way.

Do you know God counts? So anyway, they send the spies in and they come back with an evil report. And we won't read all of this here, but a couple of verses I do want to read. In chapter 13, look at verse 27.

And they told him and said, We came into the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. I mean, they admit there is a better life. They admit there is fruit.

They admit there is honey. They admit there is sustenance. They admit there is blessing.

And all of these things, they are there. In other words, God has kept His promise. There is such a place.

And Christian, there is such a place for you too. You know? Do you see the application here? Nevertheless, uh oh, here we go. The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great.

Moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. Now, the children of Anak are who? They are what? Giants, right? That's where Goliath comes from. And so they go on and list all the people.

But it says in verse 30, And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. Verse 31, But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than they. And here it goes back and forth.

And here it goes back and forth. And then over in chapter 14, it gets to the point where the people believe the evil report, and doubt and unbelief comes in their heart. And we know this as we read, you can read Psalms and read a similar account.

I forget, is it Psalms 95? I'm not sure where now. My mind just went blank. But anyway, Psalms talks about this, and of course then we read it in Hebrews as well, that their problem, if you understand their problem was not the giants.

The giants did not keep them out of Canaan. The walled cities did not stop them. It was unbelief that stopped them.

It was unbelief. Look what happens here in chapter 14. And in verse 10 it says, But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.

And then 11, And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be? Now watch this, Ere they, what? Believe me. See the root of this whole scene, which takes up several chapters here in the Old Testament, and actually almost two chapters here in the New Testament Hebrews, is this key phrase here. How long will it be ere they believe me? You think God is still crying that out of heaven today? I do.

You know, even Jesus said, what did He say? When I return will I find faith? You know, how long? It seems to be one of the cries of God. You know, how long ere they believe me? How long ere they believe me? For all the signs which I have showed them. Then you jump over to verse 24.

It says, But my servant Caleb, watch this, because he had another spirit with him, that means in his heart, and hath followed me fully in his heart, him will I bring to the land where unto he went, and his seed shall possess it. There is a place in here, I didn't read it, where Caleb basically makes the statement, you know, the inhabitants of the land, they shall be bread for us. I mean, he's so full of faith that, you know, not in himself, he wasn't as big as those giants was he? He didn't have the weaponry or the arsenal to knock down the walled cities, but he said, if God is for us, they'll be bread.

You know? And so we see this spirit over here of belief in his heart, and in those with unbelief, and this is the scene that we're dropping back into from a New Testament perspective. Sitting over here in the New Testament and wondering why is God making us review this story here in the New Testament? I'm a Christian, I believe, and I would say to you, you have the rest of redemption, some of you, but you don't have the rest of Canaan land. Some of you are wilderness Christians.

You're in a place of desolation. You're in a place, your Christian life, you ever notice some of you, your Christian life is just like this. Do you know how long the journey was from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land? Does anybody know? How many days walk was it? No, it was eleven days.

It's eleven days, they figure approximately. Eleven days. But you know what? They went like this for forty years.

You know where they got? Nowhere. Now God was with them. He fed them.

Didn't even let their clothes wear out. He was still blessing them. Still took care of them.

Didn't let people destroy them. You know, they had the rest of redemption, right? You ever feel like that in your Christian life? Just, I'm not getting anywhere. Well, they didn't get anywhere either.

And so that's why I say, you know, it's God's desire that we enter into this rest of Canaan land. This rest of Canaan land. One way to illustrate this for that class of Christian maybe might be this.

You ever heard the phrase window shopping? You all know what that means? You're going down the street, there's this big department store, and if you've ever been to a big city, New York, Atlanta, wherever, Dallas, I know some of you from Texas. I met a lot of you from Texas yesterday. It surprised me how many were here.

But anyway, there's these department stores and you go by and there's these big glass windows, you know, bigger than you, and there's all this stuff in there. And maybe it's things you really need and you want to go in there and you want to buy it, but you don't have the money. You don't have the resources to do it.

And so you're frustrated and you wish you could, but you can't. And you don't know how to do it. You don't know how to get the money.

And you'd like to be able to do it, but you're just not sure what to do. When really, the money is available for you to go in and buy what you need, but you just keep window shopping. That'd be very frustrating, wouldn't it? And that's what it is with a lot of Christians like this.

They're looking through the glass and they see Canaan land. They see the honey. They see the fruit.

They see in other people's lives. They see in the Bible all of these things. You know, maybe they've never led a soul to Christ.

Maybe they're even afraid to witness. And yet, the Bible says God will give you the power to speak, but they've never been able to appropriate that. And they don't know how.

And, you know, they just keep going in circles like this. And, you know, their Bible study's a little dry and their prayer life's a little flat. And they know it'd be a blessing, but it doesn't seem to work for them.

And so on and so on and so on. And I would say the root problem, or one of the root problems, is unbelief based on this passage. Because it says, take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.

So it seems like it is possible for a person to know God, have experienced redemption, gone through the blood of Christ, and yet they're a wilderness Christian just like this. Just like this. And they wonder, why am I not growing? Why is it that so and so is growing and I'm not? Why is it that they're advancing in the Kingdom of God and I'm still back here in the first grade? Well, one of the reasons is so simple.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God, the Bible says. It's impossible. You cannot go or grow or get into that place and get past window shopping until your faith is there.

And with that comes a complete surrender. You see Caleb in the story here, you know, if he had just fought a giant based on his own strength, he wouldn't have lasted ten seconds, would he? But the basis of his another spirit that he talked about was his faith in God. Just as God said, how long will it be before these people believe me? God could say of Caleb, he believes me wholly with his whole heart.

And so he was able to do great exploits for God. He was able to say forty years later, give me that mountain, not in pride, but in faith because he knew God had promised him that mountain and he could claim that promise in faith and stand on the record of God. God has said it that I can have that mountain.

I choose to believe God. Give me that mountain. And he got that mountain, didn't he? And that's a lot of the Christian life.

It's not trusting in yourself. It's not trusting in things or in churches, but it's believing God. It's submitting yourself, submitting to the truth of God and allowing yourself to be surrendered to what he has for your life.

Now, I would also just say for a minute, maybe the other application we talked about here is those that struggle with assurance of salvation. Those that struggle with assurance of salvation. And again, I recognize there could be different reasons why you struggle with that.

And I cannot sit here and name all those or go over all those things. But one of the root reasons, one of the problems that is in your heart is a heart of unbelief. You have to be able to get to the point where you say, I am a Christian because God says so.

And I believe his record and I believe his son. Now, that sounds so simple, but you know, faith is that simple. The effect is not simple.

The effect is very profound in your life. And again, I am not talking today to those that are sitting here that are not born again. If you're sitting here and you're restless because you have a lot of sin in your life, because you've not truly been to the cross, because the blood of Jesus has not truly cleansed you, I'm not

talking to you.

I hope this message does unsettle you. But those that are born again, but just seem to struggle with assurance, may I say you are under the load of works. You're under the load of works.

It's like I read a story once in a missionary book. I don't remember which one it was. Someone was in the Philippines and this missionary, this was a number of years ago, was riding down this muddy road there as they have in the Philippines in a wagon.

And he was driving his oxen down the road to go to the next village. And there was this older man, a native Philippine man walking down the road and he's carrying on his back this big bundle of heavy weight. And the missionary stops and says, you know, would you like a ride to the village? And the old man agrees and he climbs into the cart, you know, behind him because the missionary is in the driver's seat up here.

And a few minutes later he turns around to say something and he sees the old man sitting there on the bench in the back, but he's picked up the burden and he's got it up on his back again, straining and sweating. And the missionary looks at him and just wonders, what is this man doing? Why is he picking that thing back up? And I think that those of you that struggle with assurance of salvation, it's a little bit like that. You know, God has already picked you up.

You're in the cart. You know, you have the way. You're in the way.

You're going in the way, but you keep picking up the burden again. You know, you've got to give it to God. You know, you have to get to the point where it's not a belief in yourself.

It's a belief, a belief in God's record. And faith is not an intellectual thing. It is an action word that will move you somewhere.

And it will move you from the kingdom of darkness into the light of His dear Son. Faith will do that. And when we do, we do not want to presume upon God by then picking up those things that God has delivered us from and putting them back on our back here, even though we're in the wagon of God, may I say it that way.

You know, that's here an evil heart of unbelief. That's doubting God. And we need to remember that the number one job of the Holy Ghost is conviction of sin.

According to John, when Jesus is describing the work of the Holy Ghost, the number one job is conviction of sin. And the number one sin He talks about is what? Believing in Me. Believing in Jesus.

So, you know, if you've been convicted by the Holy Ghost of your unbelief and then you've put your faith in Jesus Christ, to start picking that thing up and questioning it, is questioning the work of Jesus Christ. You don't want to be doing that. You need to see that, may I say, based on God's Word here as unbelief is sin.

You know, I can say that very clearly. Now, some of you, I may say that and you kind of like recoil and say, wait a minute, brother, I'm just struggling with faith. I'm just saying, look at the Word of God here.

Beware, take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. You know, there comes a time when you just have to believe. You just have to have faith.

You have to take that thing off your back and say, I believe God. He's going to take me on down the road. He's going to get me to heaven.

It's not me figuring it all out. It's not me doing this or doing that. That's works.

You know, some of you are still under the law, you know, and the law, the letter of God, it says, the law says that you are a killer. You know, faith faith is so important to enter in to have that another spirit like Caleb. The reason he had another spirit is what faith faith faith.

OK, let's keep going here. All right, the next verse here, I just want to pause for a second on and then we'll go quickly through some of the others, because they are somewhat going over the same thing several times here. But this one is important.

Verse 13, and that is, But exhort one another daily. While it is called today, notice the word today again, that's going to be in here three or four times, lest any of you be hardened to the deceitfulness of sins. And what I'd like to say to each one of you is, you know, you have a part in my faith and I have a part in your faith.

Your part is to exhort and encourage me, and my part is to exhort, encourage you. You see that here? It's a command. May I say it's a New Testament commandment.

It says, but exhort one another. How often? Daily. Do you know why God does this? Even though unbelief is a sin, God knows this and at His heart of mercy and understanding compassion says, it's a sin and I've warned you, but you know what? I know what it's like to live down there.

My son has told me all about it. And I believe him. And so I know you're going to need encouragement.

So I'm going to tell you what to do. Encourage, exhort one another daily. So the word encourage in the New Testament and exhort here actually means to take strength from yourself and transfer it and put it into somebody else.

Sometimes my hands are hanging down. Sometimes I don't have the strength I need for today. And so what you have to do is you actually have to take some of the strength God has given you.

You actually have to push it and put it down into my heart. That's a powerful thing, isn't it? You know, encouragement is a powerful thing. It's a powerful thing.

It's like oxygen to the soul. It's like oxygen to the soul. In other words, since it says daily in here, I don't know if I'm going out on a limb here, but I take it to mean that I'm not going to make it if you don't encourage me in my faith and you're not going to make it either.

Now, I would like to think theologically, well, I can do anything. All I need is God. Well, I know that's true, too.

But look what it says here. Exhort one another daily. You know, one of the reasons we have prayer groups is this here so that you can do all the things you're here and you can not only have some confessing back there, but you can have some encouraging and exhorting.

You need it. You know, it's not doesn't make you less of a man because you need encouragement or less of a Christian girls because you encourage me. According to this, you need it.

I can testify I need it. I need it. Sometimes I don't have the strength it takes in my own self, in my faith, today.

Sometimes I struggle with unbelief. I do. But, you know, during those times, it seems like God will send somebody up to me.

I'll get a note in my mailbox. I'll get a phone call. And, you know, it's like 180 degree turn.

I suddenly strength comes into me. I think, you know what, I can make it the rest of the day. Praise God.

I'm encouraged. Do you know how that feels? Well, if you know how that feels, do it to somebody else. That's the exhortation isn't here to just receive.

It's to do it. Exhort one another daily. It's so important.

Do not miss this little verse tucked here in the middle of all these warnings here. OK, because here's the mercy. Here's the understanding, the compassion of God right here in the middle of all these warnings.

Isn't that wonderful that God knows your frame and knows my frame? Amen. Now, one other thing that I want to touch on here. There's so many things and so little time, isn't there? But well, turn to Galatians chapter five.

There's one point I want to make here as we're talking about faith. One little aspect I'd like you to see quickly here. Look at verse six here in chapter five for just a minute.

We need to see that faith or belief in God is also the root and the beginning of love in our life. Watch this. For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything.

And. Nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love, which worketh by love, you know, until you really, truly have got to the point of fully trusting and surrendering to God, you will not love him the way you should. Now, you can say you love him, but if your faith is weak, I'm sorry you don't, because I have learned, I believe the Bible teaches that trust or faith and love are a double sided coin.

It's almost like you can't get one without the other. You ever seen anybody born again or ever remember going through it for yourself? You know, before you're born again, you didn't love God. You didn't you didn't love Jesus.

You were at enmity with him, the Bible says, but then when you transferred your faith from yourself and trusted him and trusted the blood of Jesus, it opened the door to all of a sudden you could look and say, oh, praise God, I love God, I love Jesus. But which came first? Your faith. Right.

So the more faith, greater faith, greater love. Greater faith, greater love. That's a biblical principle.

Greater faith, greater love. And with that comes the third leg of that very important stool, and that is obedience. Caleb, again, fully trusted God, loved God, had another spirit.

And he was ready to obey him. He said, where's the Giants? Let me at them. You know, he was going to obey God no matter what he was.

I really believe I don't understand all this. He wasn't afraid of the Giants. Let them be bread.

He was ready to obey. You know, obedience to God in this world never makes sense. May I say that in our logical mind? If you try to intellectually reason it out, it isn't going to happen.

I remember before. Well, actually, I was born again and then my wife was born again six months later. And we had the misfortune of both having a college education, which was a great hindrance to us coming to Christ.

And I was twenty nine, I'm sad to say, before I was born again. And my wife was almost 30 because it was about six or seven months later and she had seen me reading the Bible. So she began to read the Bible and wondering, you know, what's going on with my husband? This, you know, smart, intellectual corporate executive is now talking about God all the time and she wasn't sure what to do with that.

And and she's much smarter than me. If you know her, you know what I mean. She has a master's degree in education, which is even worse than having a college education.

And she was just struggling as she thought her struggle was intellectual. But here's the trick. Her problem wasn't intellectual.

She had a heart problem. OK, and so she was like, you know, wrestling with some of these things in the Bible. And of all things, you know, the thing that tripped her up, Jonah.

Jonah being in the belly of a well for three days, she said in her intellectually college educated, master's education degree, mine said, God, no, it can't be. And you got to remember, we were Catholic and we didn't know anything about the Bible. And she said, if I could just believe that, if you could just show me that, then, OK, I'd know this whole thing of being born again is probably for real.

And I don't recommend this and I don't know what to do with all these things other than the mercy of God. So she just she did one of these. You ever do one of these? And her finger came down on the passage.

You know, the passage where Jesus said. And the son of God, just like Jonah, will go into the earth for three days, and he used the story of Jonah to explain him dying and going into the earth and being resurrected. She got on her knees and started crying, you know, because she realized her problem wasn't intellectual, that God has the answers for all these things.

Her problem was in believing God. And she was so humbled and embarrassed that God would take mercy and show her that when she didn't deserve to be shown that because she thought she had an intellectual problem. And he showed her she had a heart problem that she just didn't believe God.

And so she believed Jesus and she was born again that day. And she called me at work and it was great rejoicing. But, you know, faith is not intellectual.

That's how I got on that faith is not in God is not waiting for you to agree with him. He doesn't need you to figure everything out because faith isn't a matter of intellectual ascent. The Bible says that by faith, Noah built an ark.

Well, intellectually, that was the dumbest thing he could have done. Here he is building a boat, whatever it is, 400 and some feet long and 200 feet wide, whatever it is, in the middle of a semi arid, almost desert land where it's never rained. I mean, nonsensical, but by faith he did it.

So his faith moved him to an action, right? He did something. Faith wasn't just a mental ascent by faith. Faith was the door that moved him to build that ark in that desert, dry land.

And but what was the result of his faith then to the saving of his household? And so all of these things you need to start connecting in your mind as we go through this. Let me get back to our passage here. We want to keep moving, starting to run out of time.

OK, well, let's go through the rest of these a little quicker here. There's some things further on we want to get to. That was verse 13, verse 14, for we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence, which is our faith steadfast into the end.

We talked about that yesterday. Remember, you know, faith isn't faith if it's a momentary spike on the graph. You get a hold of it and you hang on.

While it is said today, if you'll hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the propagation of that word heart again. For someone they had heard did provoke, how be it not all that came out and the not all here, of course, is Caleb and Joshua out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved 40 years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness and to whom swear he they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not.

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Again, notice the repetitive thing. God is saying this over and over again.

If you're not entering in. To the to the abundant, may I say, surrendered Christian life, it's because you have a lack of submission to God in your heart. You are not submitting yourself to God's plan for your life.

You're not believing him enough that he will take you as you go up against that walled city. I know some of the things in your life seem like a giant, like a walled city. And you say, oh, brother, you don't know what's in my life.

I don't know. You're right. I don't know what's in your life, but I do know God.

And I know what Caleb did looked foolish to the world, but by faith he entered in. And so some of you, you need to get out of this wilderness experience and believe God and walk and move in faith. Now, notice in verse four, chapter four here, it says, let us.

Therefore, this is the first let us first of eleven. Let us therefore fear. And the word fear here means all tremble, revere, you know, just like you ever been on a I was on a boat recently in the ocean.

The waves were about 15 feet high. Now, the same ocean that was holding me up and keeping me safe and keeping the boat afloat was also an awesome, trembling thing, you know, that made me kind of hold on and go. Whoa, you know, this is something.

Well, that's a little bit of this kind of fear. God is the one that sustains us. But at the same time, there needs to be a trembling in your heart.

It is awesomeness. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left left us of entering into his rest. Any of you should seem to come short of it.

There are so many promises in the New Testament. We don't have time to go over those. I know you know them.

You need to look at those promises in the word of God and you need to appropriate them. May I say by faith, you will not get them by studying it in the Greek and the Hebrew and the Aramaic. And I'm not against the Bible study.

If you know me, I love Bible study. But it comes down to faith. Will you believe what he says? Will you believe what he says? For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them.

But the word and here's the Bible, the word of God is important. The word preached did not profit to them. You know, you can know truth and it does no good.

Truth without faith is flat. You can know the Bible. You can have truth.

But truth mixed with faith enables you to then appropriate the abundant Christian life. The rest of Canaan land, the grapes, the honey, the milk, the victories that you need. And may I say the kingdom of God needs.

You know, God had a plan for Canaan land. That place was full of all the ites, the Jebusites, you know, all of those people. And God wanted those things taken.

And today, God has business to take care of in the kingdom of God. And wonder of wonders, he's given it to you and I to do. We're the ones, we're the ones.

And God needs you to enact those spiritual victories. But you're only going to do it by faith. Prophet, they're not being mixed with faith.

So you take the word of God, the promises of God, you mix it with faith and then you enter in to Canaan land. You enter in to the abundant Christian life. OK, for we which have believed to enter into rest, as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest.

Although the works were finished from the foundation of the earth, for he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise. And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place, again, if they shall enter into my rest, seeing, therefore, it remaineth that some must enter therein.

And they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. Now, that's a little bit talking about the Jews. The gospel was first preached to the Jews.

Remember that? But many of them did not enter into the gospel because of unbelief. Now, some did. Some did.

Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David today, after so long a time as it is said today, notice the word today again, young people, please see this today. Some of you have already allowed God to work in your heart, but some of you haven't. And I would just beg you and plead with you based upon this simple admonition in the word of God today, today, today, today.

If you will hear his voice, harden not your heart. Isn't that a horrible thing that you and I as a human being can harden our hearts to God? You know, what a what a power we have, but a scary power. And that's why it says, let us fear.

I hope you fear your own heart. I hope you have a fear that your own heart can get hard. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. And I just want to make a brief comment about this thing. He's using here now the Sabbath as the seventh day, as as a rest, as an example.

And, you know, there are people in this New Testament age that unfortunately read things like this and they get confused and they go after the shadow instead of the reality. OK, they they get hung up on which day you worship God. And I remember years ago I was living in Florida and someone said to me, we were I was in a church where we were renting a particular building from a particular denomination that only worships on Saturday.

I happen to be there doing some work on Saturday, getting ready for church on our Sunday in the afternoon. And one of the men of the church there said, well, you know, what is your Sabbath day? And I said, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And he said, well, I mean, which day? And I said, every day, because Jesus is my Sabbath and I can rest in him every day.

I've entered into his rest and I don't have to have a day to rest. My soul is at rest in Christ. And he said, wow, I never thought of it like that, you know, because if we get hung up on the shadow, we'll forget who is the rest.

We have the people of God. It says here we have entered into a rest. Have you entered into that rest? The rest of God today is Jesus Christ.

He is the Sabbath. He is the Lord of the Sabbath. He is the rest of God.

He is the answer that God has for your restless heart. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Now, that's the second let us.

And some people struggle with this word labor here. You know, I would like to tell you that the Christian life is all just a bed of roses and it'll just all happen. You don't have to do anything.

That's not true, is it? On the one hand, we can't do anything to save ourselves. But on the other hand, once you are a Christian and I believe this passages to Christians, you do need to. There are things God is asking you to do.

You know, if you're not praying, if you're not reading your Bible, if you're not ministering to other people, if you're not, may I say, one anothering, which there's a lot of those commandments, if there isn't in you a holy grip to do the work of God, you're going to lose out. You won't enter into the rest. You won't.

You know, there is no such thing. There is no place for a lazy person in the kingdom of God. May I say it that way? There is no place for a lazy person in the kingdom of God.

There is work to do. Let us labor together. There are things that God needs to have done, and He's going to use you or He's not.

He's going to use her instead. For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow. And as a discernor of the thoughts and intents, again, watch this word of the heart.

The word discerner here means basically critic and not critic as in critical, as in cutting somebody down, but it will divide that thing and reveal it. And may I say it'll just lay it open and expose it for what it is. You need to get into the Word of God.

It will increase your faith and it will lay open your heart of unbelief and show you who you really are. The reason that this is attached on to the end of this very story is God. The reason God was so distraught, so upset with these people that He finally said, this is the tenth time you have murmured against me.

And what He was really saying is, I've given you my word and told you what I'm going to do ten times and you rejected my word. It's like reading something in the Bible and saying, I'm not convicted of that. I'm sorry.

God doesn't need you to agree with what He said. He has said it. It is a sword that will lay it open and divide it and show it and critique and show you your own heart.

Your choice is, will I believe it and agree with God? See, conviction of sin is finally agreeing with God. This is really where I'm at. You understand that? Conviction is really agreeing with God, seeing sin from such the perspective, seeing your heart from such the perspective for just a moment.

You understand this is where my heart really is. And you say, oh, no, I don't want my heart to be there. I want my heart to be with God.

And you acknowledge that and you confess it. And we need the Word of God to do that. We need the Spirit of God to reveal those things to us in the Word of God.

And I believe the sharpness of it comes because Jesus Christ has promised that the Holy Spirit would be our guide. And may I say, I believe the Holy Spirit is the guide of the sword of the Spirit. And He guides that thing to cut right into your life perfectly with precision where it needs to cut.

And maybe it's different in your life than mine, and maybe tomorrow it'll be the same, but it'll still cut. The same message can be preached to 10 people. And, you know, they all can hear something a little bit different.

But that sword is guided by the Holy Spirit. And it'll cut and lay open just what needs to be revealed in their heart and in your heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight.

But all things are naked and open in the eyes of him. And that's what I was just saying. Verse 14, seeing then that we have a great... Now, it's going to shift a little bit, but not really.

Seeing then is a word like therefore. It's saying because of... I know you're going to struggle with unbelief because of the work that the Word of God is going to do and lay open your heart. Once your heart is laid open, once you see who you are, once you see your need, what are you going to do with your need? Where are you going to take it? The Bible has the answer.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, for we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the filling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin. Let us... Here's the third one. Let us, therefore, come boldly into the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy.

and find grace in our time of need. I want to talk about this last part here in the last five or six minutes that we have. This whole thing of Jesus being the High Priest is a wonderful thing.

We're going to talk a lot more about it tomorrow, but just a few things here, particularly about the throne of grace that we want to talk about. When we come to God and our heart is open, it's an admission of our dependence upon Him. Part of the work of the Bible and in going to our High Priest of God is an admission of our dependence.

Christians are some of the neediest people on this earth. Do you know why? Because they see their need. They know they're not going to make it unless God helps them.

And that isn't a sign of weakness. That's meekness and putting ourselves in submission and yielding to God. And in that, then, we get strength to go on.

So the dependence isn't a weakness. It is a sign of understanding. It is the reality of knowing that I need grace from on high.

See, the point of this passage in is that we may get grace in our time of need. And the grace that it's talking about here is not the grace that we need God's favor to get saved. It's the grace that's a strength that will come in and undergird your soul and your heart and your Christian life.

Because you need help sometimes, don't you? You need a strength from above that will sustain you and strengthen you so that you'll be able to face the things that you need to face. You know, faith... Sometimes, you know, this whole thing of faith, I do want to say one more thing about that too, is we try to make it so hard. But may I say to those of you that struggle with assurance and also those of you that are struggling to enter into the rest, faith is not hard.

Let me just give you an example. I was standing over here to the side and in the back watching you as you came in here this morning and as you sat down. And as I was watching, I did not see any of you pick up your chair and examine the bolts or the welding.

Or I didn't see you look at the... I didn't see who the manufacturer was. Was it a reputable dealer? I didn't see any of you get on your cell phone and check it out. I didn't see any of you ask any of the principals who was the craftsman that built that thing.

You just took for granted, or may I say you had faith, that it would hold you. And you know what you did? You sat down. But do you know what you really did? You trusted somebody else for the strength in that chair to hold you.

That's all faith is too. I'm just asking you, can you not trust Jesus Christ for the strength to hold you up? That's all I'm asking you to do. That's all God is asking you to do.

It's not an intellectual ascent. It's an understanding, and then it's a trust. If you can trust that chair without checking into it, why are you striving and arguing with God about His Son? Can you not sit down and just rest in the promises of God in Jesus Christ? Can you not do that today? A couple of other thoughts here.

Jesus Christ here is our priest. It's interesting that He's shown here on what's called the throne of grace. Normally, we would think that's a paradoxical phrase because the throne denotes royalty and a king.

And grace denotes a favor or a giving something that you don't deserve. And those two wonderful things come together in the person of Jesus Christ. And this passage right here in verses 14-16 was a very important passage in the Reformation in Europe back in the 1400's and 1500's.

And out of this passage, there were three principles that they espoused or cried out. They said, no sacrifice but Calvary. No priest but Christ.

No confessional but the throne of grace. And so what this passage is saying to you and I is that these three things are very important. And here, you need to find your way to this throne of grace.

And I can tell you, you can go to Jesus here because the verse before that says, He is a great high priest. He was tempted like you are in all points. You know, that word tempted again is stress or pressure.

He was put under the full measure. You know, if you take a submarine and you take it down deep enough in the ocean, you'll reach a depth somewhere where it cannot stand the pressure and it will just implode. It will crush inward.

You know what I'm saying? Jesus Christ was put to the utter depths of all the temptation and pressure in this world, but He didn't crush. He didn't crack. He didn't even buckle.

He understands. So you have a great high priest. I have one.

He knows your weakness. I have weaknesses. You do.

Go to Jesus Christ today. He was tried and tested in all points like you are. And you can go to Him today and He will know what you're saying.

He will listen to you. And I think the final point I just want to make is this. When it says, let us therefore come boldly, that word boldly there doesn't mean brave.

It means with a freedom. The throne of grace is free and you can come freely. You do not have to come with anything in your hands.

You do not have to qualify by something you do. You can just come boldly, meaning based on the sacrifices of Jesus Christ, I come boldly, meaning with freedom in your time of need. And some of you still have needs.

Some of you here are struggling with assurance. Some of you here have not entered. Some of you here are still window shopping on the Christian life.

And I want to warn you, lest you don't apprehend these promises. You need to fear. And the reason you need to fear is, do you know what happened to the children of Israel because of their unbelief? Whenever you have unbelief, do you know what it ends up doing? It leads you into other sins.

You know, they ended up fornicating. They ended up saying they'd rather be back in slavery in Egypt. Can you imagine that? Being delivered out of slavery and saying they think they want to go back.

But you know, if you don't enter into this Canaan land, if you don't enter into rest, if you don't find your way to the abundant Christian life, you don't want to know why you're always struggling with the world, young people? Do you know why that temptation is still there sometimes? It's because you're not believing God

and you haven't entered in. If once you've tasted truly Canaan land, once you've found that rejoicing, that milk and honey is so sweet and so good, and you're free in Christ to come to that throne of grace, that leeks and garlic and fish, that's just garbage. It's garbage.

It's garbage. It'll grow strangely dim, as the hemorrhoider says. And that's how all this needs to flow together.

This passage is very important for Christians in our day and age. It was written back almost 2,000 years ago, but it's as applicable today as it was then. Maybe more so, may I say.

Maybe more so. We have a lot of people who have a lot of head knowledge and who have understood what it is to get born again, and then they're just still wilderness Christians. Come out of the wilderness.

Come home to Canaan land. Come to the throne of grace. Believe God.

Submit yourself to God fully. Surrender to Him today. Amen.

Thank you for listening. May God add further applications. And tomorrow we'll try, Lord willing, to do chapters 5 and 6. 6 is the big one a lot of people have been asking about.

We will look at that tomorrow. So if you can, read those two chapters. Amen.

God bless you.

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