

Enter Into Rest

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the kingdom of God first and trusting in God's goodness and power to enter into spiritual rest and victory.

Duration: 1:07:31

Scripture: Psalm 51:6, Matthew 11:28, John 14:18, Ephesians 2:6, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 4:4, Hebrews 4:9

Topics: "Rest"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the Israelites' experience in the wilderness and how God provided for them with manna and water for 40 years. Despite witnessing miracles and receiving daily provisions, God was still angry with them. The speaker then shifts to the state of the church in the first century and the present day, highlighting the need for believers to come up higher and see things from God's standpoint. The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and belief in receiving the promises of God, as demonstrated by the Israelites' failure to enter the Promised Land. The speaker also discusses the role of the peace of Christ as a referee in our hearts, indicating when we have done something wrong and need to repent.

Transcript

Yesterday we were seeing how God desires truth, reality, in the innermost being, in our inner parts. And the test of whether we fear God or not is basically this. See, all Christians think that they fear God.

But for myself, I have used this as a test to find whether I fear God or not is whether I'm more concerned about purity in my inner life and thoughts and attitudes than in my outer life. All people who are more concerned about having a good testimony before men alone about purity in the outer life and who are careless about their thoughts and attitudes, which no one can see, are people who do not fear God. The mark of a man who fears God is, or a woman who fears God is, that he or she is far more concerned about those inner movings and thoughts which no one can see, far more concerned about one's private life than one's public life.

In fact, Jesus said that if you clean the inside of the cup, you don't have to worry about the outside. The outside will automatically be clean. It's an amazing thing.

If you read carefully in Matthew 23, he told the Pharisees, you are so careful about the outside of the cup. You are so particular that you want to impress people with everything you do, the way you speak, the way

you dress, the way you read your Bibles, the way you go to the synagogues. Everything is designed to give people an impression that you are really holy.

But he said, you are not worried about the inside of the cup. God is worried about that. And he said, if you clean the inside of the cup, you won't have to worry about the outside at all.

It will automatically be clean. The Old Testament law was like an ointment. If you had a sore, my hand, this ointment would, you could rub this ointment on it and it would go.

But it didn't solve the problem, because once it went in one hand, the sore would come on the other hand. So I was glad to have this tube of ointment called the law, rub it, and it would be okay. Then it would come in my leg or somewhere else.

This is how people lived till Jesus came. Always something erupting somewhere or the other. You finish with one thing and then another thing has come up.

And they were glad to have the ointment of the law. The law raised the level of the Jewish people far higher than the level of all the nations of the world. It was good.

We never despised it. It was God who gave it. But when Jesus came, it says he set aside that, and he brought grace, perhaps the most misunderstood word in Christendom.

The law came by Moses, but grace came by Jesus Christ. That's John chapter 1, verse 17. The law came by Moses, and grace came by Jesus Christ.

I ask people, who's greater, Moses or Jesus? And if Moses lifted you that high, how high do you think Jesus should lift you? Far higher. How much higher? As much higher as Jesus is above Moses. But when we look at those who say they are under grace, does it look as though they are higher than all these people in the Old Testament, like John the Baptist and Elijah? Oh no.

They are so much lower. That's why I say grace is the most misunderstood word in Christendom. Grace is not just forgiveness.

The Bible says, when you are under grace, sin will not have dominion over you. That's the mark of a man who has really understood grace, that sin has lost its power over him. I speak as one who was born again, and for sixteen years, I thought I was under grace.

Well, I experienced one part of grace, forgiveness of sins, and I was defeated. I never let other people know it, because it was inside. And then God opened my eyes to see what grace was, the new covenant.

And here in Hebrews 4, we see another aspect of the new covenant. It says here, it's called entering into rest. And it says here, in verse 9, there remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

The Old Testament Sabbath was instituted by God, and it's mentioned here as verse 4 in the last part, and God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And referring to that Sabbath, he says in verse 9, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. Yesterday I said that David wanted truth in the inward parts, but he couldn't get it.

He couldn't make it. You couldn't have it until Jesus came. Everything on the inside could come only after Jesus came, after the Holy Spirit came.

The law could only clean up a person on the outside. In fact, everything in the Old Testament was on the outside. The temple was on the outside.

Today the temple is inside. The sacrifices were on the outside. Today we make sacrifices inside.

There the sacrifices were visible for everybody to see. Today our sacrifices, Jesus says, let no one see, let only God see. Everything is hidden in the New Covenant.

I was mentioning this ointment, which cleaned up the outside. Now what Jesus brought is like an antibiotic, which a person can take, and it deals with the problem inside, and then the sores disappear on my hands and my legs and everywhere, and I can throw away that tube of ointment. That's what it means to be free from the law.

But if you haven't taken the antibiotic, you better keep the tube of ointment, because that will at least keep you from sin. The trouble with a lot of Christians is that they've thrown away the tube of ointment and they haven't taken the antibiotic either, and they are worse than those people under the law. When can we be free from the law? When I've really come under grace.

Sin shall not have dominion over you because you're not under law, but under grace. I'm not living with a tube of ointment anymore. I've got an antibiotic that's gone inside and dealt with the problem inside.

I've learned to allow the Holy Spirit to convict me inside. I have secret dealings with God alone when nobody knows. I've learned to judge myself first, stop judging other people.

Dealt with the problem inside, inside the cup. Ask God for power to help me to clean the inside of the cup. I don't need the tube of ointment anymore.

So here it speaks about arrest, and that's another thing which those people under the law never understood. And yet it was a very important thing under the law. We read that once in the time of Moses, when the Sabbath was instituted for Israel, there was a man who went out on the Sabbath day just to pick up sticks.

There was a law that you shouldn't make a fire on the Sabbath day. Now he hadn't made a fire. He was just picking up sticks, probably to make fire on the next day.

But he did some work. And they asked Moses, what shall we do with this man? Moses said, well, let's seek God. God said, kill him.

He disobeyed the Sabbath. It was a terrible thing in the Old Testament, to break the Sabbath. Many, many times God rebuked the Israelites for breaking the Sabbath through the prophets.

There's an old chapter on it in Isaiah 58. And we read that the reason why, you know, it was not just the weekly Sabbath they had, God gave them other Sabbaths, like there was a Sabbath of giving the land rest after six years of working the fields. God said, give rest of the land on the seventh year, and I'll give you double the crops in the sixth year, so that you'll have enough to carry you through till the eighth year.

But the covetousness of those Jewish people made them disobey. Now the fields in the seventh year too. In the beginning they obeyed, but after a while they didn't keep that sabbatical year.

But you can't fool God. God's not mocked. What a man sows, he will reap one day or the other.

And for 490 years they disobeyed God by not keeping the sabbatical year for the land. And God said, okay, I'm going to send you to Babylon, and for 70 years the land will have rest. Because you wouldn't give it rest once in seven years.

I'll make sure you give it now. I'm just using these examples to show how serious a thing it was to break the Sabbath in the Old Testament. Now the Pharisees in Jesus' time, they understood the seriousness of it, but they misunderstood the meaning of it.

And it looks as if they were frequent, I mean, not looks, we see frequently that they were in conflict with Jesus on this very issue. We read of Jesus coming into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and the Pharisees were watching him closely to see whether he would heal someone on the Sabbath day. Their understanding of work was that you don't even heal a person.

They misunderstood it completely. And sometimes I wonder whether Jesus deliberately did things on the Sabbath day to provoke them. Provoke them, because we read in John chapter 5 that he went to the pool of Bethesda.

Now he could have gone to the pool of Bethesda on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, but he went on a Saturday. He could have healed those people any of those days, but he went there on a Sabbath day, and he saw this man lying there for 38 years and told him to take up his bed and walk, and it was Sabbath day. And the Jews wanted to kill him.

Why did Jesus provoke them? Because he was trying to point out to them, this is not the meaning of the Sabbath. This is not what God meant. Have we understood what is the spiritual application of the Sabbath for us today? If it was such a serious thing, as I showed you from a few examples in the Old Testament, and such a controversial issue in Jesus' discussions with the Pharisees, so controversial that the Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus because he broke the Sabbath.

And now today, does all this have a meaning, or does it have no meaning? To many Christians, if you were to ask them, what is the Sabbath mean to you? They still think of that Old Testament law that you must rest one day, and they say, well, the day is shifted to Sunday now, and we read the Bible and do special things on Sundays in relation to God that we don't do on other days, that's the Sabbath. Why do you get that in Scripture? It says here, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. And anything that is emphasized tremendously in the Old Testament must have a spiritual application for us, and here is a whole chapter, Hebrews chapter 4, written on this subject in the New Testament.

And it says in the first verse of this chapter, let us fear, lest there is a promise remaining of entering into God's rest. Any one of you should seem to come short of it. To whom is he writing? He's writing in chapter 3, verse 1, we read, to holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, whose apostle and high priest is Jesus Christ.

He's writing to born-again believers, holy brethren who have partaken of a heavenly calling. He's not writing to unconverted people. He's not writing to Jewish people.

He's writing to those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their apostle and high priest. And what does he tell such believers? We fall into that category. Let us fear, lest there is a promise given to us of entering into rest, and we should seem to come short of it.

And this is in connection with the previous verse, verses, chapter 3, verse 16. He speaks about those who came out of Egypt, led by Moses, but he was angry with them for forty years because, verse 18, he swore that they would not enter into his rest. The land of Canaan is called here a land of rest.

That is another big thing in the Old Testament, entering the land of Canaan. God gave the Israelites, we read in Exodus 3.14, two promises. To the elders, Moses spoke, saying, Thus said the Lord, I will take you out of Egypt, and I will bring you into Canaan.

That was the gospel they heard. It had two sides to it. Don't ever forget it.

I will take you out of Egypt, I will bring you into Canaan. Now, some people say, the promises of God are always fulfilled. Well, here is one promise that wasn't fulfilled.

None of those elders ever entered Canaan to whom God spoke. It was the next generation that entered. God may have something for us, and it may never be fulfilled if we don't believe, if we don't have faith.

And that's what it says here in chapter 4, verse 2, the middle, The word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. They heard a word, but their faith was not added to it, so the word did not profit them. In other words, it was not fulfilled.

Remember that. Everything that God has for you is not going to be fulfilled automatically. Christ died for the sins of the world, the Bible says.

There are millions of people in the world whose sins are not forgiven. Why? Didn't he die for the sins of the world? This is the answer. Their faith has not taken that word, that Christ died for their sins.

So that's the example he uses here. The children of Israel came out of Egypt, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and you're redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Maybe you've come out of Egypt, you're born again.

Good. Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, he says, do you know that there was one more part to that gospel, and that they were to enter into Canaan. And that's the part that God left out to that entire generation of 600,000 people.

And he says, take heed to that warning. In 1 Corinthians 10, quoting the same example of the children of Israel perishing in the wilderness, he says, these things are written as an example for us, upon whom the end of the age has come. It's an example for us.

What is the example? That people who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, who are baptized in the Red Sea, which is a picture of baptism in water. And 1 Corinthians 10, verse 4, speaks of a baptism in a cloud, which is a picture of the baptism in the Holy Spirit that came from above. What is the purpose of that? And I tell you, this is where so many who speak about the baptism in the Holy Spirit today have gone completely astray.

In the Old Testament, we read of that pillar of cloud is called in 1 Corinthians 10, a baptism in the cloud, a baptism in the Holy Spirit. What was it for? The cloud came for one purpose. It wasn't to give them any experiences.

It was to lead them into Canaan. And that's the purpose with which God gave the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. I believe this is where so many people have gone astray.

They have not understood the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come from above to lead us into Canaan. Step by step by step, that cloud went ahead of them, and at one point, they turned back.

That's why God was angry with them. They would not enter into Canaan. They would not enter into that life of rest.

They would not enter into the life of victory. They looked at the giants and said, well, these giants look stronger than God. They insulted God.

That's unbelief. What does it mean when it says, their faith was not mingled with that word? Here was a promise God had given them. I will bring you into Canaan.

He didn't tell them, I will bring you out of Egypt, and then you will fight your way into Canaan. That's not what he told them. He said, I will bring you out of Egypt, and I will bring you into Canaan.

That responsibility was entirely God's. All they had to do was believe. But they looked at the giants.

Were those giants more powerful than the armies of Pharaoh that God dealt with? Pharaoh's armies, Egypt was the only superpower in the world in those days, and God dealt with it mightily. God liberated his people from the only superpower that existed in the world in those days. And who were these? What was Canaan compared to Egypt? Couldn't God deal with those giants? He certainly could.

But they looked at those giants and said, no, it's not possible. And they did not enter that land. And he says, God was angry with them.

Did he bless them? Did he give them food every day? He certainly did. For forty years he gave them food, every day, miraculously from heaven. Did he give them water to drink? They never thirsted for forty years.

Who? People whom he was angry with. You know, there are believers who say, God answers my prayer. I'm sure he does.

It doesn't prove he's happy with you. It only proves he's a good God. God makes the sun to rise on the good and the evil.

You know that verse in Matthew 5? So I ask people, what do you have to do for the sun to rise on you? You have to be either good or evil. Qualify? Everybody qualifies. He makes the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous.

If you want the rain on your farm, what do you have to do? You have to be either righteous or unrighteous. That's all. Everybody qualifies for God's material blessings.

Everybody qualifies. Good and evil, righteous and unrighteous. And when the Israelites received the manna for those thirty-eight years after they had turned back from Canaan's land, it only proved that God was a good God, that he answered their prayer.

When they were sick with snakebites, he healed them. I want to say this, my brothers and sisters, because I've seen so many people around the world deceiving themselves because they think God's answering my prayer proves he must be happy with me. No.

If those prayers are related to material things, if God blesses you materially, it only proves God is a good God. It does not prove he's happy with you. You may say he's done a miracle for you, not greater than getting manna from heaven, not greater than supernatural healing from snakebites, not greater than quails falling in the field in front of you so that you can have a meal.

They experienced some of the greatest miracles written in the whole Bible. There was no one. If you had one of those Israelites coming up here and giving a testimony, we'd sit with our mouth open wondering, boy, look what he saw.

He got, I mean if we, today if a man gets bread falling from heaven once, he'd be testifying about it around the country for the next thirty years. But these people, they received manna every day for forty years. God wasn't happy.

If a man came up here and said, I want to tell you brothers and sisters, I saw the sea split open. And not one of these fancy stories like people speak nowadays. This man would be speaking the truth.

One of the Israelites. I saw a cloud coming from heaven that led us day by day. And we prayed and God gave us bread from heaven, not for one day, my friends, forty years.

And when we were thirsty, a rock was split and we got water and one after the other he'd give his testimony. I think most believers would sit there and look at him and say, boy, what a man of God. Would you ever think that God was angry with that man for all those forty years? That's what it says here.

He was angry with them. Because despite all these things, they never got into where God wanted them to go. And that's a word for every Christian who finds a satisfaction in material blessings, God's prospered me, God's given me a good home, God's given me good children, God's provided all my needs.

That doesn't necessarily prove that you have sought the kingdom of God first. There are lots of people out there in the world who are atheists, godless people, who have many material blessings, far more than you and me. It doesn't prove they've sought God's kingdom.

It only proves that God is a good God. Miracles also do not prove that God is happy with us. They experienced miracles.

Jesus healed sick people who were never converted later on. And I believe some of those people who shouted crucify him must have been some of the people who were healed by him once upon a time. It's amazing.

Jesus said that there would be people in the last day who come to him and say, Lord, we did miracles in your name. And he will say, depart from me, I don't know you. So miracles also don't prove that God is happy with you.

Have you entered into rest? Have you understood this Sabbath rest that God wants you to enter into? It's an inner thing. And I want to share a little bit with you tonight as to what that means. The Sabbath which God emphasized so much in the Old Testament, the Sabbath which was the issue on which there was a great conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, is explained to us as a rest into which we must enter.

We first enter into rest when the heaviness and the weight of guilt is removed from us. When we first come to the cross, when we see that Jesus died for us, that unrest and heaviness that was in our heart because

of sin, because of the guilt of our sin of many years, is gone. That's the first step.

And I trust most of us have taken that. If not, I want to tell you, you'll never come there unless you come in humility to the cross and say, Lord Jesus, there is no way that the guilt of my past life can ever be blotted out. In my country there are 800 million people who are trying to blot out the guilt of their sins by doing good works and giving money to the poor and spending a lifetime of doing so many things, going to sacrifice, giving sacrifices, going on pilgrimages, doing something to get their sins forgiven.

It cannot be forgiven. That's only through the blood of Jesus that he shed on the cross, that all our past guilt is removed in a moment. That's the first step.

And if you haven't taken that, you need to take that now, where the guilt of your past life is removed in a moment, when you say, Lord Jesus, I'll never be good enough to come to you. I come to you as I am, just as I am, without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come. If you come like that, you can be forgiven.

But many who are forgiven like that still have not entered fully into rest. I see Christians who are weary and heavy laden. In my younger days, I used to preach that verse, Matthew 11, 28, in the streets of India, here and there.

Jesus says, Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Today I preach that to believers. I find them all weary and heavy laden believers, who are so heavy laden, agitated about something or the other, or about someone or the other.

Weary, heavy laden. Are you one like that, born again, but not in rest in your heart? There's no rest in your heart. There's agitation in your heart, disturbance.

It's like they have this thing called an agitator in some of the older washing machines. Always agitating, going this way and that way and this way and that way. Is your heart like that, concerning someone, concerning some situation, concerning something about the future? It's to such people Jesus says, Come to me, I will give you rest.

It's to such people the word of God says, There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. It's not that external seizing to work, stopping work. It's the inward seizing from all unrest, seizing from all agitation, coming to rest.

A rest that comes, like it says here, why was it those people could not enter into rest? It says, because they didn't have faith. They didn't believe that God was almighty, mightier than those giants. But it says for us, verse 3, Hebrews 4, 3, We who have believed enter into that rest.

It's only by faith. It's not by struggling. The more you struggle, the more there's going to be unrest.

You know, heaven is a place of perfect rest. And this is where the Lord invites us. When John was on the Isle of Patmos, he first saw a vision of the Lord.

He was persecuted. He was exiled to that island. And then the Lord showed him a vision of the condition of all the churches in his time.

It was the first century, but it was, five of those seven churches were in a pretty backslidden state, very bad state. And he looked at all this, and it's pretty depressing when you look at Christendom even today.

The Lord said then in chapter 4 to John, He said, Come up higher.

I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, that's the word you need to hear. The Lord is inviting us to come up higher, to come up and see everything from his standpoint. Then we will enter into rest.

That's the place where the Lord wants to bring us. In fact, when you were converted, potentially that place was already yours, because the Bible says, He has seated us with Christ, where? In the heavenlies. But we come down to earth so quickly, and we look at everything from this earthly standpoint, and that's why all the unrest comes.

God invites us to come up higher, to enter into his rest, by faith. When Jesus taught us to pray, he didn't say we have to repeat that prayer every day. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

I think it's a very good thing to repeat it, if you can mean every sentence. If it's just like a parrot or playing a tape recorder, then it's useless. But he did say, Pray in this way.

When you read the two passages where it comes in Luke 11 and Matthew 6, he said, Pray in this way. In other words, basically, the content of all our prayers should follow this general guideline. How does it begin? He said, Before you start your prayer, say, Our Father who art in heaven.

In other words, remind yourself of two things. One, that you are praying to one who is your Daddy. The one who is your Father, who loves you more than anyone on earth loves you, who is compassionate like a father, pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him.

He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. This is the one to whom we are praying.

We are not praying to someone who is demanding. We are not praying to one who is reluctant to forgive, but one who is ready to forgive. We are praying to one who understands that we are dust.

We are praying to one who has seen your sincerity. We are praying to one who knows the struggle in your life. One who sees how you are longing to please him, even if people misunderstand you.

One who understands your particular situation, your particular difficulties. A father, that's the first thing we need to remember when we pray. We are praying to one who has tremendous compassion for us, who has understanding.

You know, some of us have temperaments which are very reserved and shy. I'm like that. I was born like that.

And I remember in my younger days, before I found my security in God, I used to be envious of believers who were extroverts. You know, these happy-go-lucky people who are born like that, who can slap people on the back and say, Hi, how are you? And here I am, I'm reluctant to do things like that. I'm very shy and inward-looking.

I say, I wish I could be like that. God never made me like that. And then I felt inferior to them.

Then till I discovered that I didn't have to be an extrovert to be a disciple of Jesus, I could follow Jesus with my own temperament and personality. Jesus didn't say go into all the world and make extroverts. He said go into all the world and make disciples.

And that's what I am to be. Now, I say this because some people feel, I want to be like that person who is very outgoing and can always talk about wonderful things and make people happy. Well, if you're not like that, it doesn't matter.

God made you the way you are and you've got to find acceptance. God understands you even if people don't. And some of us have had experiences in life which have given us certain hang-ups, have maybe warped our personality, and people don't understand.

I want to say God understands. He understands the things that people don't understand. He understands everything we've gone through in our past life.

You know, sometimes we compare believers like this. One believer has reached up to here. Another believer has reached up there spiritually.

And we say, well, that believer is ahead of this brother, so he must be more zealous. Well, not necessarily. It's true, he's higher up.

But you know what God sees? God sees where they started from. This man who is here may have started from way down there. And this man who is here only started from here.

So who's made more progress? God who sees everything, sees this brother as a far more wholehearted brother than this one. But we can't see that. We see this person as ahead.

And we are. That's why the Bible says don't judge. All those wonderful faculties of discernment that you think you have, you don't have them.

Just humble yourself and say, Lord, I don't know. I even see myself darkly through a glass. How in the world am I going to see other people clearly? It's good to humble ourselves and acknowledge that we know very, very little.

God understands. We're speaking to a father who understands our struggles, who understands the pit from which we've come up. That other brother was fortunate enough not to have come up from such a pit, so he doesn't have the hang-ups I have.

He doesn't have the struggles I have. He was fortunate enough to be brought up in a home where the parents were God-fearing. Maybe you came from a home where it was like a gutter.

God understands that, even if men don't. God makes allowance for it, even if men don't. He's a father.

And it's when you understand that, when you believe that, we who believe enter into rest. Otherwise, you'll always have a complaint. Somebody doesn't understand you.

Somebody doesn't understand your struggles. Why do you want people to understand your struggles? Jesus says, come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden. He didn't say, go to men.

He said, come to me. Even today, he says, come to me and I will give you rest. That's the Sabbath, where my life can be a perfect Sabbath rest.

I want to say, my brothers and sisters, that before you work for the Lord, that's what you need to come into, first. God is a father. And the second part of that prayer was, our father who art in heaven.

See, I need to know not only God as my loving, compassionate, understanding, kind father, who understands everything about me, my personality, my warped temperament, the crookedness in my personality that has come up through the difficult circumstances I've had in my home and upbringing and maybe my ancestry. You know, we have carried a lot of baggage from our past ancestry and life. God understands it.

He understands you fully. And he's one who's in heaven, which means he's one who's got total control over everything. There are times when I sit outside my house and I look at the stars and I say, Lord, how great you are.

And if you know a little bit of geography, you know that these stars are much bigger than our Earth. They are massive. In fact, I've read in the geography books that one of these stars is so big that our entire solar system could rotate inside it if it were hollow.

Can you imagine that? The sun and the moon and all the planets rotating inside this star at the same distance if that star were hollow. That's how big some of these stars are. But they are so many light years away.

It will take us thousands of years to reach some of those stars, even if we travel at the speed of light, which is 186,000 miles a second. And so far away, such a huge universe and our Earth, this thing which will look so big when we live on it, when you look at it from the heavenlies, it's a speck of dust, not even a speck of dust. This is how God sees it.

And I say, Lord, I want to see this myself. I want to encourage you to do this sometimes. I do this particularly when I have a difficult problem, when I'm facing.

When I have a difficult problem, this is what I do. I want to think of my Father in heaven. And this is how I meditate on my Father in heaven.

I shut my eyes and I think of Almighty God up there, my Heavenly Father, running this massive universe with all the stars and huge stars and small, small planets and one small little speck of dust somewhere out there called the Earth. And on that Earth, there's a still smaller speck of dust called me. And this person called me is having a problem, which I think is a huge problem which nobody can solve.

And when I look at it from that perspective, I say, Lord, what is this? This little thing worrying me so much? Our Father who art in heaven. I want to encourage you to begin your prayers like that. Not necessarily always with those words, but with that faith that, you know, a lot of our prayers are not answered because we don't believe.

Because if you pray a prayer and you don't believe, it's like writing a huge letter and not mailing it. You can have a satisfaction that you wrote the letter, but nothing is going to come of it. You don't have faith.

But when you pray even a one sentence prayer, it's like a one line letter and you mail it, it goes. And you have faith and say, my Father in heaven, I believe you know everything that's happening here and there is no problem you cannot solve. Is there a problem in the universe that God cannot solve? Is there a problem on Earth that God cannot solve? Do you believe that that problem you are facing is so big, God can't solve it? Sometimes I used to think like that.

Now this is what I do. I meditate on Almighty God who runs this universe and then I come to rest. Otherwise I'm in unrest.

I'm agitated. I'm worried. The Bible says, be anxious for nothing.

But in everything, Philippians 4.6, by prayer and supplication. And I think that means specific prayer. I think that means specific prayer.

You remember the blind man who came to Jesus and said, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus said, be specific. What do you want? Don't just say, have mercy on me.

He said, I want my eyes open. Okay, granted. We need to be specific.

Oh God bless me. What does that mean? What do you want? Lord, this particular thing. Okay.

Prayer and supplication. Lord, this particular thing is the thing that's bothering me. This particular problem right now.

Maybe this particular sickness in my child. This particular problem that other person has created for me. In everything, by prayer and supplication.

And then there's a very important word after that. With thanksgiving. Well, prayer is, I don't know.

I don't know what it is. Not exactly like mailing a letter. It's like email.

It reaches there immediately. Thank you, Lord. You received it.

Praise the Lord. You received it. Just I click that button and it's gone.

It's reached that person already. Thank you, Father. Thank you for hearing me.

Thank you for saying that you received the email and you're taking care of that problem. Wonderful. Thanks a lot.

And when you do that, it says peace. The peace of God will guard your heart and your mind. It says it will guard is a military word.

It's like a military garrison of soldiers surrounding your heart and your mind. The peace of God will guard is compared here to an army that will not allow all those anxious, worried thoughts to come in and disturb you. And what do you experience in your heart then? A Sabbath rest.

There remains a Sabbath rest for God's people. God is insulted when we don't trust him. That's why it's a serious sin.

That's why Jesus said we must become like little children. How easy it is for little children. No matter what problems there may be in the house.

Consider a home where there's a little one-year-old child. Maybe there's not enough money in the house for a meal tomorrow. In India, most people live in houses that are not their own, rented from landlords who can just turn you out of the house one day.

And maybe the landlord has asked you to vacate the house tomorrow morning and you haven't got a place to move. And you've got to pack your things and move. I've seen homes in India where if you don't move everything is put out on the roadside and there you are with all your stuff.

Immersive. And maybe it's like that. The situation is like that.

There's not enough money, you've got to vacate the house tomorrow, you haven't found a place and the father and mother are in a panic, awake, worried. And you go and see that one-year-old child is fast asleep. He's at rest.

And you wake up that child and say, hey, don't you know that you've got to vacate this house tomorrow? Don't you know that there's no money in the house? He says, well, that's daddy's problem, it's not mine. That's what the Lord wants us to say too. We've got a daddy too.

Lord, I want to be like that child. Yeah, it is a problem. The child's got to vacate the house tomorrow too.

But he's got a father, he's not an orphan. One of the things that Jesus said to his disciples in John chapter 14 was, verse 18, I will not leave you as orphans. You know, they were orphans.

As long as Jesus was with them, he was okay. He was like father, mother, everything. And life was so secure with him around.

And one of the things in the Gospels we see is that the disciples felt so secure when Jesus was around. It didn't matter if there was a storm in the sea, it didn't matter if whatever happened, if demons were there, man with 6,000 demons came at them, wouldn't bother them if Jesus was there. They were so secure.

And now he says, I'm going to go away. Can you imagine the panic? And on top of that he says, it's better for you that I go away. They just can't understand that.

How can it be better for us if you go away? We only feel secure when you're here. And he says, if I don't go away, you know, I can only be here in Galilee. What about those children of mine in India? They won't have me.

Or in the United States, they won't have me. Only you folks will have me in Galilee. You fellows will be secure.

But if I go, the Holy Spirit will come. And when he comes into people's hearts, they'll have me with them wherever they are. So, you know, the Holy Spirit came to replace Jesus.

He said, another comforter. He didn't say 8 comforters. He said, I will give you another helper.

Someone just like me. And the wonderful thing will be that he can be with you wherever you go. And he'll be with people everywhere.

See, this is the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming. And that's why it says in Romans chapter 8, that when the Spirit of God has come into our heart, the first thing he cries out is, you know what it is? Daddy. Abba is just the Hebrew for daddy, by the way.

I don't know why they didn't translate it properly. Maybe they felt it was not right to use such a word. But Abba, in the, it's very similar to the English language, to the Indian languages, which they use for father.

Exactly that. It's a word of intimacy. In our Indian languages, we have an official word for father, which is equivalent to the Indian father.

And then we have Abba, which is daddy. That's what the Holy Spirit says in Romans 8 says. He says, Abba, daddy.

I'm not an orphan anymore. I've got someone to provide for me. I've got someone to take care of my problems.

It's okay. The landlords told me to vacate the house, but my God can. The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

He can turn it wherever he wills. Proverbs 21.1 says, he can change the mind of the landlord by tomorrow morning, no problem. He changed the mind of King Ahasuerus.

That's a lovely story there in the Old Testament where it killed Mordecai. And he had an equally wicked wife who sat down with him the whole night and made a seventy-five or seventy foot gallows. Now you don't need a seventy foot gallows to hang a man.

You just need about ten feet. But he was determined to humiliate Mordecai the whole nation. Like a six-story building, a huge gallows.

They must have spent the whole night doing that. And Mordecai, he was sleeping. He didn't know what was happening.

He didn't bother because the Lord who took care of him, the Lord didn't slumber or sleep. So that was enough. If the Lord was awake, then Mordecai could sleep.

And I'll tell you that. The Bible says he gives his beloved sleep. And if the Lord's awake, you can sleep.

Even when your enemies are working overtime and doing all types of things, planning evil for you. And the wonderful thing we see there is how God turned the tables on Haman and turned the tables on the devil. It's a very simple way.

God didn't use a great complicated way by striking Haman down with lightning from heaven or something. That would have been not so good. He did a better way.

He just took away sleep from the king of that country, King Ahasuerus. You know God can sometimes disturb a person's sleep. King Ahasuerus couldn't sleep that day.

So he said, well, maybe the best way is to read some boring books. Let's get the history books of the nation and start reading them. Maybe I'll get some sleep then.

So he got all the history books out and he got somebody to read the history books and went on and on and on and still couldn't sleep. He finally came to the place where it says, Mordecai saved the king's life. By the time it was about six o'clock in the morning.

Mordecai saved the king's life and the king was wide awake. He says, well, what did we do for Mordecai? He saved my life. He said, we did nothing.

Oh, I'm sorry, you missed out on that. We better do something to honor him and see the timing of God. It says that very moment Haman had finished the gallows and walks into the king's compound and walks into the king.

The king says, well, Haman, what do you think we should do to honor a man whom the king wants to honor? And of course, Haman, proud man that he is, thinks, well, that must be me. Who else? And he says, I think you should put him on a horse and get one of your chief men to lead him through the city and say, thus will the king honor anybody. I said, that's a good idea.

Why don't you put Mordecai on a horse straight away and lead him through the city. See, God's got a sense of humor. Just striking Haman dead with lightning out there at night wouldn't have been such a wonderful thing, but to humiliate him, to make a fool of the devil.

This is our father. Can't you rest? These things are written for our instruction. The God who lived in Mordecai's time is just the same today.

And he couldn't call him father. We can. We're not orphans.

I want to say to all of you, my brothers and sisters, you're not an orphan. Do you know that? Don't let the devil tell you anything else. You are not an orphan.

It doesn't matter if you slipped up here and there. God is always on your side against the devil. Always.

I sometimes use this illustration in India. I say, supposing you've got a very naughty, troublesome 12-year-old child at home. I say, you mother, you're there.

Your father's away at work and this child is creating problems for you and he shouts at you and yells at you and bangs the door and goes out into the yard. And then you hear a scream. And you see him there standing against a tree with a huge cobra snake with his hood up, ready to strike him.

And remember, this is your naughty child who's giving you headaches day and night. Now what will you say? Will you say to that child, you deserve that. Now you snake, sting him.

Kill him. Will you say that? And every mother sitting in the congregation says, I'll never say that. I say, are you sure? Even to that naughty child who you tell him, I'm sick and tired of you.

You won't say that? No. I want to say, God's a better mother and father than you are. And even if you're naughty and you've done something terrible and the devil comes at you, God's on your side against the devil.

He doesn't like your sin, but he's always on your side against Satan. Every day, every time I live and I sleep with this confidence, God is always on my side against the devil. And if I confess my sin and I'm honest with him and I keep my conscience clear, then I've got a sound pillow to sleep on at night.

A good conscience is the best pillow to sleep on. A conscience clear of offense toward God and toward men. This restlessness comes in our conscience.

Have you obeyed that scripture which says in Ephesians 4 and verse 26, that even if you're angry, you must never let the sun set on your anger. Now in those days, they didn't have electricity, and I know how it is in a lot of our villages in India too. Once the sun sets, when it gets dark, you just go to bed.

So what he's saying is, before you go to bed, settle everything that needs to be settled. To all married couples who might conduct marriages, I give this bit of advice. From this day onwards, please never go to sleep at night with anything unsettled.

Don't let the sun set on your anger or your bitterness or some misunderstanding or something unsettled. Clear it. Let give God a chance to work.

Enter into the Sabbath. There is an unrest there. That's what God wants more than anything else.

More than you're serving him, more than you're working for him. When God made Adam, do you know that Adam's first day was a day of rest? How many of you knew that? He was created on the second part of the sixth day, towards the end of the sixth day. Right? What was the next day? Sabbath.

But that was the first day for him. It was as it were God saying, listen Adam, before you do any work, let's spend one day, you and I together. Then you can go out and work in the garden.

It's like joining a company which says, well, you're signed on today. You go for one month's holiday. Then we start working.

Have you ever heard of a company like that? God's like that. He's a good God. He says, let's you and I have some fellowship.

Don't do any work today, Adam, rest. That's the Sabbath, a fellowship with God. Unclouded fellowship with God, with not a cloud between.

Because every sin has been confessed, cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus. And every wrong that I have done to my wife or husband or brother or sister, I have gone and humbled myself and said, I'm sorry, brother. I'm sorry, sister.

I'm sorry for what I did. It was my mistake. And then I can go to bed.

A clear conscience. No unrest. The Bible says, let the peace of Christ, Colossians 3, it says, let the peace of Christ, verse 15, in one translation it says, be a referee in your hearts.

Now in India, a lot of our young people play football. A lot of children play football. And in football, there's a referee who blows a whistle.

When they blow a whistle, it means something is wrong in the game. And here it says, the peace of Christ is like a referee. And when you hear that whistle, some unrest in your heart, some agitation, it's God blowing the whistle, saying, you've done something wrong.

It's like a wrong, a foul start. Something wrong. It's like in these athletic games where you ran before the gunfire.

You've got to come back. It's a whistle. Come back.

Something is wrong. And in that game, you've got to just come back and settle that foul before you proceed with the game. Something is wrong, and that peace of Christ has been lost.

And you must stop everything and settle that before you proceed. This is the meaning of the Old Testament Sabbath. A heart which is at rest 24 hours of the day, not worried about the problems of life

because I've committed it.

I've emailed it to my Heavenly Father, and he's received it. And I thank him immediately. Not agitated because of something unsettled between me and another human being, or a sin unconfessed to God.

Perfect rest. I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, let us fear, lest we don't enter into this rest. Whatever else you may do for God, He does not value it if you don't first have fellowship with Him.

That first day must be a day of fellowship. Then you work for Him. We must put first things first.

God invites you today to come to rest, to trust Him. Let's pray. Now while our heads abound in prayer, I want to invite you to respond to the word of God that you have heard.

I want you to listen to the invitation of Jesus, who says, Come to me, all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. There remains a rest for God's people. Trust me, I can handle that problem.

I've got a solution for that thing that's bothered you for so many years. You're not an orphan. Trust me.

Let's enter into that rest, brothers and sisters. Let's make a decision before God today that if there's anyone you've wronged or hurt by an angry word spoken maybe ten years ago, if you haven't settled, or this morning, that from this day onwards, you'll never go to bed with a disturbed conscience. You'll make that phone call.

You'll apologize. You'll set things right. And if it's a money matter, at the earliest opportunity, you'll return that money which doesn't belong to you.

Oh, value that conscience at rest that doesn't disturb you. That's the best pillow to sleep on. Settle it.

Some difficulty between you and another brother? Humble yourself. Take that first step. Humble yourself.

Even if it's his fault, humble yourself. Say, brother, I want to have fellowship with you. And may you go to bed tonight with nothing on your conscience, with a heart at rest in God.

Just think how peaceful your sleep will be tonight. With even your problems committed to him, he who runs this universe can handle your problems. We who believe, enter into rest.

Heavenly Father, we know you want us to enter into rest in our inner life. I pray to be true for everyone here. You understand us.

You understand the struggles people have gone through. I pray that this will not be just a message, but something that leads everyone here, not only today, but into a lifetime of a Sabbath rest in God. 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. That's where he invites you, my brother, sister, close to his heart, where the toils and worries and cares of this earth cannot bother you. He invites you to come there, to lean your head upon his breast, like John did, and be at rest.

He invites you, come to me, you who are weary, heavy laden. I will give you rest. Heavenly Father, you know those who are responding in their hearts across here, this hall this evening.

I pray that you will give them such an assurance of security. Speak this word to their hearts. You're not an orphan.

You're not an orphan. You are God. Lord, God Almighty, is your Father.

I pray they will enter into a real understanding of that tonight. I pray that those whose conscience is disturbing them about something will settle it tonight, Lord. We will not postpone it till tomorrow.

Enter into rest tonight. Help everyone, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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