

Entering Into The Rest Of God's Perfect Love

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the need to enter into God's rest by overcoming the giants in our spiritual life, such as the love of money, lust, and self-justification. It highlights the importance of progressing in our spiritual journey, not comparing ourselves to others but to Jesus Christ alone. The speaker encourages seeking understanding from the Holy Spirit to divide between soul and spirit, leading to a deeper experience of God's rest and love.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 2:7, James 4:7, Philippians 3:12

Topics: "Overcoming Spiritual Giants", "Entering God's Rest"

Description

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Transcript

Let's begin with a verse in Hebrews 4. We know that we are not supposed to have any fear or anxiety, and that's one of the things that anyone who is preaching nowadays will say with all that's happening in the world, that we must not fear, we must not be anxious, which is right, because God cares for us, and our faith in our loving Heavenly Father is tested at a time like this, whether we believe that He knows the number of hairs on our head and the sparrows that fall to the ground, etc. The words of Jesus are tested in a time of trial, not when things are going relatively easy, and for many of you, there may not be any financial struggles, but there are people who are struggling among God's people financially, maybe in other countries, I know certainly in India, and their faith is being tested in more than just a matter of whether they'll be attacked by the COVID, but whether they'll be able to survive this time when they're not able to get work, etc., many who are paid on a daily basis, who work in the farms, etc. So we're not to fear.

It doesn't matter how poor we are, if you're a child of God, God is a Father who knows all our circumstances, and He can provide supernaturally in any situation, in any country, in any generation, in any century. We believe that with all our hearts, but here in Hebrews 4.1, it says, let us fear. So here is something we must fear, and it's, I feel a lot of people who listen to the other part that is not fear, probably don't pay sufficient emphasis to Hebrews 4.1, let us fear.

What should we fear, if we are not to fear all the other things on this earth? Let us fear if God has made a promise of entering His rest. Any of you may seem to come short of it. What is this rest? In the context, it's quite clear that it is not forgiveness of sins.

There is a rest that comes when the rest of freedom from guilt, or for some people, the freedom from the fear of going to hell, which is a very low level of fear. But freedom from guilt is an important rest that everybody should come to. We always emphasize we must keep a clear conscience at all times.

And one mark of a clear conscience is there is rest in our conscience. There's peace, that we know that all known sin has been confessed to the Lord. And that's the meaning of walking in the light, and the light that we have, which keeps increasing as we walk with the Lord.

And there is a rest there that we are sure there's nothing in our conscience, and we can look straight into the face of God without any sense of guilt. By regard, iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. I really believe millions of Christians, their prayers are not heard because of just one verse, Psalm 66, 18.

By regard, sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. That means it's a waste of time praying. And many don't realize that.

They've got bitterness against somebody. They haven't forgiven someone. They're wishing evil for someone who maybe harmed them.

Whatever evil another person may have done to me, if I wish evil towards one human being, even the smallest amount of evil, there is sin in my heart. That is not the heart of Jesus Christ. We've often said that the standard of sin is not just that we don't do anything we know to be wrong, but sin is all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

That's the standard of sin in the New Testament. Not just that we keep the commandments of the law. And the glory of God is seen in Jesus Christ, John 1, 14, full of grace and truth.

So you put John 1, 14 and Romans 3, 23 together, sin is anything that comes short of the life of Christ. That's sin. And for a person who's a disciple of Jesus, that is the only definition of sin.

Every other definition of sin that there is in say 1 John 3, verse 5, in transgression of the law, or James 4, the last verse, knowing what to do and I don't do it, those are all good. But we graduate from there to the clearest definition of sin, which is coming short of the glory of God, coming short of the life of Christ. So if I'm conscious of anything in my heart, which is contrary to the life of Christ, for example, wishing evil for someone, Jesus never did that.

That is sin. Then I'm wasting my time praying. You can pray for a whole hour, a whole night, you might as well go to sleep.

It's an absolute waste of time. We need to convince ourselves of that. That is, there is one sin in my heart.

And I believe I'm more and more concerned about people who have something in their heart against someone whom they don't like. It's one of the lowest levels I want to begin with, before we move into the fear mentioned here in Hebrews 4. And all of us, every human being, if he's crossed seven or eight years of old, somebody has harmed him, even a little child. And they are angry with someone.

And as we grow up and get older and older, there are many people in our life who have hurt us, harmed us, relatives, in-laws, neighbors, bosses in the office, and people who did harm deliberately or accidentally, all through life. And we remember them. We cannot erase them from our memory.

But if there is anything contrary to love in my heart towards any of them, that is sin. Now, in the early days of our Christian life, we don't understand that level of sin. So God is merciful to us.

And I certainly didn't understand that in the early days, soon after I was converted, mainly because nobody ever preached it. I mean, you had to hear the light of the word before we see something as sin. So because nobody preached it, I never knew that if I have one unloving thought towards any human being, that is sin.

But that's become more and more clear to me. And as I've understood it more, I've shared it more and more in my ministry, that we have to examine our hearts constantly. You read in the, when we come to the Lord's table, it says, let a man examine himself and so let him take part.

And those days they broke bread once a week. It was urging people at least once a week, examine your heart. But a wholehearted disciple is not examining his heart once a week.

He's at all times saying what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 4, I am conscious of nothing against myself. That means in his conscious life, that means whatever God had given him light on in his life, he was conscious of nothing. You see, the flesh is a huge area.

We don't have light on it all of a sudden. God is merciful to us. If he showed us everything, all the corruption in our flesh, we get so overwhelmed.

We'd be discouraged. He shows us only as much as we have light on. It's something like how we study in a school.

We go from one class to another. We don't get 10th grade lessons when we are in the first grade. We'd be overwhelmed.

So God also leads us step by step and he leads us as far as we want to go. And as you move up higher and higher, you discover that ultimately God's law is the law of love. In 1 John 1, when it says God is light, we say, well, what does light mean? It's not defined.

Walking in the light, at least we can understand, is walking in honesty. But what does it mean when it says God is light? It doesn't mean God is honest. God is light.

And we have to find some other verse that explains it. And that's in 1 John 4, where we are told God is love, 1 John 4, 8. So love we can understand. So God is light means God is love.

Light is love. And anything contrary to love, the love of God, is darkness. I must hold that standard.

Even if I take all my life to get there, I must say, Lord, I will never lower your standard to convince myself that I'm okay. For example, I've used this example in Philippians 4, 4, it says rejoice in the Lord always. That means there must never be a moment in my life when there's no joy in my life.

Never, never, never. There can be external feelings of sorrow, for example, when a loved one has departed or something like that. But never, it doesn't say rejoice in your circumstances, it says rejoice in

the Lord.

And always, always means 24-7. And if a person lowers that and says, well, always doesn't mean always. It means most of the time.

So if most of the time I'm rejoicing and happy, I guarantee you'll never get past that. It's like quitting at fourth grade and saying, that's fine. I've learned to add and subtract and divide and multiply and I can read, that's it.

No, there's a lot more in education than fourth grade. So it's not just most of the time, rejoice in the Lord who never changes, always. So any area where I read scripture and I sort of bring it down to my level, I remain on that level forever.

I've got to hold God's standard where it is and honestly acknowledge I haven't got there. And I don't mind repeating this endlessly, I've spoken about this many times, but until we get there, we need to keep hearing it. If your student is finding it difficult, multiplication is difficult, they're going to keep on doing multiplication problems till they understood it.

It's like that. We are not finished with hearing a message once. Most messages we hear got to hear 10, 20 times before it really grips us because we are such creatures who justify ourselves.

There's a tremendous amount of self-justification, which is an unrecognized sin in most believers. This tendency of Adam to not just disobey God, not just listen to one's wife, these are a couple of things he did, but also when caught to say, yeah, but it was not me, it was my wife, to find some excuse. That's what Adam did when God asked him a straight question, yes or no, did you eat of the tree? So the self-justification where Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees is very much in us and we have to hate it.

They hate it like we hate adultery and murder and bitterness and pride and every wretched things, dirty thoughts and pornography. I got to hate self-justification like I hate pornography. I got to see it like that.

Because Jesus said in Luke 16, 15, that self-justification is an abomination or detestable in God's eyes. In any way to justify myself is an abomination to God, is detestable to God. And I've always linked that verse with an Old Testament verse in Deuteronomy.

I think it's chapter 22, which says when you, the Israelites were told when you go outside the camp to go to the toilet, take a spade with you. And when you're finished, you must cover up what has come out from your body, cover it up, because the Lord God walks in the midst of the camp and he does not want to see any abomination there. So that's what I call an abomination, an unflushed toilet bowl.

And what is that? Justifying yourself. Justifying yourself is a filthy toilet that's not being flushed. And God says it's an abomination.

I don't want to have one bit of it. I want to have zero self-justification that when God shows me something, I immediately say, yes, Lord. Yes.

Yes, Lord. That's me. That's me.

It's not my wife. It's not anybody else. It's me.

I did it. I took from the fruit and I ate it. It doesn't matter who gave it to me.

I ate it. So self-justification is very important. And so in this area of love, we've got to be ruthless with ourselves.

If you really want to, you know, a lot of people seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you really want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, take this verse as the mark of being filled with the Spirit. Don't be satisfied you speak in tongues.

Don't be satisfied that you had some experience in the past. Romans 5, verse 5. To me, as I've studied the scriptures, that is the clearest definition of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

That means my heart is, if I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, my heart is filled with the love of God. Not human love. No.

Not some low standard of love that I have, but the love of God, which I cannot produce myself, but which God has to give me. That's why I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Because in my flesh, there is no love.

There's a lot of self-justification and love of myself. But the love of God that says, God so loved the world, the type of love that is willing to give his only son for a world that hated him. A love that's willing to lay down my life for those who hate me and want to harm me.

A love that wants to do good to all those who are evil towards me and only wish the best for my enemies and that type of love and willing to do anything to serve and bless those who have harmed me. That type of love you cannot produce. You can artificially do something on the outside, but you can't have it in your heart until you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I see that love mentioned here in, as you've often heard me say, in three ways. One, the foundation of God's love in my heart. God, the love of God poured in my heart by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit assures me you are loved. You are beloved of God. You're the apple of his eye.

He cares for you. He loves you more than all the birds he has created and everything else. He loves you intensely.

More than any earthly father loves his child. Many of you are fathers. More than you love your children, you have to be assured in your heart God loves you more than that.

Would you be concerned if your child is sick? God is concerned about you when you're sick. Are you concerned about some problem in your home, financial problem, physical problem, sickness? God is more concerned about you. To be assured of that, to have zero doubt about it, then I'm founded.

The love of God has been poured into my heart by the Holy Spirit. That's the foundation. Then from there, the two floors of first love for God, a fervent love for Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit produces. I can love people when I see, oh, how much they've done for me. I respond in love.

When I hear about Jesus dying for me and you see a movie of him being whipped and crucified and you feel moved and you hear about his love for you and you respond in love, that's good. It's a human

response in love, which we can have towards other human beings as well. But that fervent love for Christ can only come through the Holy Spirit.

For example, Jesus said, you cannot love God and love money. And in the measure in which if a person has got a slight love of money, in that measure, the love of God has gone down. You see, it's like a bottle.

If it's not filled up to the brim, there's a little space there. And very often, when a lot of people's love for Christ is something like that, there's this little space there where they love something else. Someone else, Jesus said, you can't even love your wife or children or father or mother, anything more than me.

The whole bottle has got to be filled with love for Christ alone. And very often, there's a little bit of love for money. There's a little space in that bottle that's empty.

And only the Holy Spirit can fill that whole bottle, fill my whole heart, so there's no place in my heart for anything other than God. And the next thing is to love others, especially among God's people. All men will know, you know, you're my disciples when you love one another.

A new commandment, Jesus said, I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you. It's not just love one another, that itself would be a difficult standard, but to love one another as much as I have loved you. That's the commandment in John chapter 13.

You must read that again and again if you're not sure about it. John 13 and verse 34, I give you a new commandment that you love one another, even as I have loved you. So the love that the Holy Spirit pours in our heart is, first of all, a deep foundation in the fact that God loved me intensely more than anyone else and more than my father, more than anyone.

And on that is the Holy Spirit produces in me a fervent love for Jesus Christ, and also from that love for Jesus Christ, love for others. When we say we love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, well, people may say, well, there's no place in my heart to love other people. Oh, yes.

When I love God with all my heart, from there, I cannot love God with all my heart without loving others. The two go together. You know, when John 4 says, if you say you love God and you don't love your brother, you're a liar.

So these are two components of the same love. The Holy Spirit fills my heart with love for others. Which type of love? The type of love that says God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, a love which is willing to lay down my life for people who are evil towards me, who say, Lord, when I think of, I mean, I do this sometimes.

There are people who have done evil to me, and very often my prayer is, Lord, please give me an opportunity to do them some good, to deny myself in some way, to sacrifice something, to do them good so that they know I have not only that I have no bitterness against them, that I can just say, I'm sorry, I have no, I tell you, I have no bitterness against you. It's more than that. God didn't demonstrate his love by telling us from heaven that he was not bitter against us for our sin.

He demonstrated by laying down his life. God so loved the world that he gave his son to die for us. That's the challenge that's been coming to my own heart more and more when I think of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

So many people in the world, when they think, oh, God, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, they're thinking of an experience. And I believe that's where the devil's deceived so many people. They just get some experience and that's it.

I've had experiences too of being filled with the Holy Spirit, but I say, I keep pressing on to say, Lord, I want your love to fill my heart. I know because that is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit. God poured out his love in our heart to the Holy Spirit that's given to us.

So this is, and coming back to Hebrews 4, you may have thought I was digressing. Actually not. Let us fear, Hebrews 4, 1, lest a promise remains of entering his rest.

Any of you seem to come short of it. And what I have been telling you so far, this is the promised land. This is the rest that God has promised to us.

A heart which is perfectly at rest is a heart that is filled with love. Anything contrary to love is unrest. That's how I see it.

And it will always bring unrest. If I'm, for example, if I'm unsure that God loves me intensely, that, you know, like, I like this living Bible paraphrase of Job and chapter Job 23, Job 23:10. He knows every detail of what is happening to me.

That's a wonderful paraphrase. NASB is he knows the way I take. He knows every detail.

The margin of my Bible says he knows the way it is with me. That means he knows every detail of what is happening to me. I tell you, it's a tremendous comfort and rest it brings into a heart when I realize God knows right now with all the problems there may be, God knows every detail, every little detail, even the details I don't know.

So many people don't know what is going to happen in the days to come. And when is this lockdown going to be lifted? And when is this, is this going to spread more? Is there going to be a second attack of COVID after sometime when this one is over? I say, God knows every detail. I don't need to know.

He knows every detail as far as it affects me. And not only he knows every detail in the new, that's old covenant and the new covenant goes one step higher and says that all those details God makes to work for my good, Romans 8, 28. So that's being at rest.

It's a rest in the fact that God loves me perfectly. And very important in these days to have that assurance. And from there, as I said, to have this fervent love for Christ, where I try to eliminate from my life everything that hinders me from loving the Lord.

Let us fear lest a promise remains of entering his rest. Any of you should seem to come short of it. Now we know that there was a difference in the way God wanted the Canaanites to be killed and the way the Egyptians were to be killed.

And God delivered the Israelites from Egypt. They didn't have to lift a finger. Moses lifted up his rod and the entire Egyptian army went buried in the Red Sea.

But when they went, they didn't have to do anything. But when they came to Canaan, they still had to trust God because otherwise they'd be like grasshoppers. These were giants out there and they could not overcome those giants in their own strength.

They had to trust God. Every victory in Canaan was the power of God, the pulling down of the walls of Jericho. They couldn't do that on their own.

God did it. And in one place we read God stopped the sun so that Joshua could win the victory. But it was not like the defeat of the Egyptians.

It was not that we sit back and God stops the sun and we just watch all the enemies being destroyed. No. In Canaan, they had to actually fight in God's power.

So it was a cooperation. I mean, if somebody just sit back and said, no, God will do it, nothing would happen. Caleb had to go and fight in order to conquer that land of Hebron.

But it was in God's power. He believed that if God is on our side, we're going to overcome. So that is the type of victory that's spoken of here.

Because if you read the previous verses in Hebrews 3, he's talking about Canaan as the land of rest. Hebrews 3, 16. Who was the ones who provoked him when they heard? All those who came from Egypt? With whom was he angry for 40 years? Hebrews 3, 17.

Why was God angry with those people? Because he told them, go and possess the land of Canaan, and they did not. He said, no, no, no, it's too difficult. The land of Canaan for many, many years, I think right up to the early part of the 20th century, I think all Christians from the teaching of all the preachers through the years was that Canaan was heaven.

You know, crossing the river Jordan, you look at some of the old hymns, it was, I crossed the river of death and enter into Canaan's land, which is heaven. But God has given us light in these last days to show that Canaan's land is not heaven, because there are no giants to be killed in heaven. Canaan's land is right now in my body, that I have to come to a life of rest where every giant of the flesh is slain.

And that's not going to be slain by God automatically, like he killed Egyptians. I've got to do it. But I can't do it in my own power.

I'm like a grasshopper. Like the 10 spies said to Moses, we're like grasshoppers before these giants in the flesh, the giant of anxiety and the giant of bitterness and the giant of unrest and the giant of complaining and grumbling and sexual lust and anger. These are massive giants and we're like grasshoppers.

How can we overcome them? Joshua and Philip said, yeah, God is on our side. These are like bread. You read Numbers chapter 13 and 14.

It's like eating bread. It's not at all difficult to eat bread. It's so soft.

He says, killing these giants will be like eating bread for us. They are like bread for us. It's that faith, but it was not sitting back and waiting for God to kill them.

It was a cooperation. So this entering into rest is not something that happens automatically. The rest that initially comes, God forgives our sins and the forgiveness of my sin, I got to do nothing.

I just say, Lord, I turn around my sins and say, Lord, I'm a sinner. I don't want to sin anymore. I'm not promising I won't sin anymore, that I can't promise, but I don't want to sin anymore.

And I believe with all my heart that Jesus died to take the punishment for all my sins. And he rose from the dead. He's alive.

Forgive me. That's all. Forgiveness is 100% from God.

Not only forgiveness, but he says in Hebrews 8.12, I will not remember your sin anymore. That is one rest. That is the initial, we can say, coming through the gate.

But then after we come through the gate, this narrow gate, there's a narrow way that leads to life. That is another rest. After coming out of Egypt, we had to enter Canaan.

That's the second thing. And that's what's spoken of here. Verse 19, they could not enter the second land of Canaan because of their unbelief.

They came out of Egypt. They believed. They believed because we know they put the blood outside the door.

They believed in that, and that's how they escaped death in their home. But when they came to Canaan, they did not believe. They could not enter the land because of unbelief.

Let us fear, lest we also have this unbelief that God can bring us into this life of rest where every unloving thought in my life is killed. Every giant is killed. And you see, this matter of conscious and unconscious sin in the land of Canaan is a huge land with many, many giants.

But the only giants they could kill were the ones they saw. They entered in a certain part of Canaan, and they saw certain, first of all, in Jericho, they killed them. Then they went to Ai and different places.

They saw certain giants. They fought them in the power of God and killed them. But that doesn't mean they had conquered the whole land of Canaan.

Even towards the end of Joshua's life, God tells Joshua, there still remains a lot of land to be possessed. Read that in Joshua. It was the closing chapters of that book.

There's a lot of land to be possessed. Just because you're occupied a little bit and it's much better than life in the wilderness, they could relax. Oh, this is better than life in the wilderness.

Yes. But God wants you to possess the whole land, right from the top to the bottom of the land of Canaan is meant for you. Every lust in the flesh has to be crucified and overcome.

And it's not going to be automatic. It's going to be with the power of God as you yield at every point. So let us fear, lest there is a promise of entering into his rest.

And what is that promise? Sin will not have dominion over you. That's a clear promise. Which sin is excluded in Romans 6, 14? Nothing.

Every sin in the flesh can be conquered by grace. Romans 6, 14. And there are so many theories about overcoming sin and victory.

And there are people who preach, became more popular in the days of John Wesley onwards, that there's an experience where you're entirely sanctified and you don't sin again. Well, it's a deception. What happened to those people who claim to be entirely sanctified is when they did something wrong, they

called it mistakes.

Well, the sad thing is that the blood of Jesus doesn't cleanse mistakes. If you go to the Lord and say, Lord, I made a mistake. Well, it's my blood doesn't cleanse that.

I didn't cleanse sin. But they were hesitant to call it sin because they said, we are entirely sanctified from sin. It's a deception.

We have to be very careful about that deception. And we must be honest. And we call it sin and acknowledge it and turn around from it.

It can be forgiven. If you walk in the light, we can be forgiven. But if we say, you know, John, once again, John is 95 years old.

And the Holy Spirit inspires him to say that there are two dangers, he says here. One is 1 John 1.10. We say we have not sinned. I've never sinned in my life or that is one deception.

Very few people will go into that. But the other is even at the age of 95, John says, verse eight, if I say I have no sin, that's another deception. Now, I don't think any of us will fall into the first deception.

If we say we have not sinned. We've all come past that and asked God to forgive us. But there are people we don't teach entire sanctification that way in our churches.

But there are some groups that teach it even today. There's an experience they say you must seek what is their equivalent of being filled with the Spirit. You're entirely sanctified.

That means you're actually saying we have no sin. And John at the age of 95, if ever a man was entirely sanctified, it had to be John. But he was filled with the Holy Spirit at the age of 30.

And 65 years later, he says, if we, he includes himself, he doesn't say you. There's a lot of difference between you and we in the Corinthians. He says, you are carnal, you are fleshly.

He doesn't say we are fleshly. Paul was not. You read one Corinthians three, you are babes.

He doesn't say we are all babes. There's a difference between you and we. So he says, if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves.

And there are lots of Christians who deceive themselves. So they're quite sincere. They go past 1 John 1.10, they acknowledge that they have sinned.

But when it comes to 1 John 1.8, they have deceived. But thankfully, we don't have that teaching in our midst. So there is a whole land of Canaan to be occupied.

And the giants that I see I can deal with, then I must always acknowledge there are giants I don't see in my flesh. And I think I've conquered everything because I don't see them. And you will never see them if you don't have a passion to occupy the whole land.

If you're not honest before God and say, Lord, I have not yet become totally like Jesus Christ. It's very clear in scripture that we shall be like him when we see him, not before that. So that means there's a whole area of my life where I have not yet become like him.

And that is the life of rest I must come to. In other words, I am not yet loving Jesus Christ as I should. There is a love that we will have for Christ when we see him face to face, and my heart will be perfect in love.

Today, when it speaks about being perfect in love, it's only the areas of the land of Canaan that I see. It's like saying I perfectly destroyed every Canaanite I have seen. Praise God.

I'm conscious of nothing against myself. In my conscious life, I love Christ with all my heart. You take this matter of the love of money.

A lot of unrest comes to many people in the area of money. That's why I mentioned it. Not only those who are poor, even those who are rich, they can come to unrest when it comes to some sudden expense they have for themselves, for their family, which say, how will I meet it? An unrest that comes due to the love of money, the uncertainty of a job, for example.

What will happen if I get fired from here? There's insecurity and a lot of people are being laid off in the company. Then a little unrest comes in relation to money. Jesus said in Luke 16 and verse 13 that no one can serve God and money.

Impossible. That's very clear. He said these are two clear masters.

If I serve God 90% and 10% money, there will be unrest in my heart one day or the other. We have to earn our living. In fact, that also is very clearly taught in a clear verse in 2 Thessalonians 3, that if someone, 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 10, if a person is not willing to work, he should not eat.

That's a law, the Holy Spirit. 2 Thessalonians 3 10, a person who's not willing to go and earn his living work, he should not eat. His family should starve.

God has ordained. He said that to Adam as soon as he sinned, by the sweat of your brow, you will earn your bread. You got to work hard, he said, to earn your bread from now on.

It's not going to be easy like it was in Eden before sin came. One of the results of sin, just like he told Eve, you'll have pain in the birth of babies. And every woman has pain when she gives birth to a baby.

And every man has to perspire in order to earn his living. So if a man is not willing to work, he should not eat. So we have to work.

But in that work, we can serve money instead of serving God. No, we have to serve God even in the job we do. Say, Lord, this is a job you've given me.

I'm thankful for it. I work here to earn my living to take care of my family. But ultimately, I'm serving you.

So that I don't become a beggar. I don't become a homeless tramp on the street waiting for other people to take care of me. Jesus was never a homeless person.

He may have been poor, but he was not homeless. He was never so desperate that he had to ask people for money or beg, never. His father provided for him one way or the other, even while he was a carpenter and later on in full-time Christian work as well.

And anyone God calls to that ministry, he'll provide even today. But we cannot serve God and money. We must be very clear on that.

I cannot love God and money. Jesus said, you cannot serve God and money, Luke 16, 13. You cannot love God and money because you will love, if you really love one, you'll hate the other in relation to God and money.

So here is another area where it's very easy for us to fool ourselves. We have entered into rest. Oh, we are perfectly free from the love of money.

Can you really say that? See, I've been serving the Lord full-time for 56 years. And to the best of my knowledge, when I quit my job in the Navy, I said, Lord, I don't love money. In fact, I took my entire savings that I had saved up in my entire naval career and gave it away for God's work so that I had zero in my bank account.

That's how I stepped out into Christian work 56 years ago. And all these years, I've never sent a report, well, 54 years ago, actually, and never sent a report to anyone. God called me 56 years ago, but they didn't leave me for another two years.

I've never sent a report of my work, never begged or asked anybody for anything, trusted the Lord, and he's provided all my needs, one way or the other. For all these years, I've never lacked. I have an abundance more than enough.

Like Paul says, we in Philippians 4, we have more than enough for our needs. But I cannot say today that my heart is as free from the love of money as Jesus' heart was. No.

To my conscious area, the giants that I know, the giants of the love of money that I've seen, I've killed. Not one is alive. But Lord, I acknowledge that there's a whole land of Canaan where there are many other subtle giants, subtle interests in earthly things and comfort and money, which I may not be aware of.

Give me light on it. I'm determined to finish off every single giant of Canaan there is. I want to enter into this rest more and more and more.

So this entering into rest, when you see it in the context of Hebrews 3, is a progressive thing. It's not something, I got it. Now I'm at rest.

Good. That is the area that you have seen. But when you read scripture in this context, we have to go further and further.

So Hebrews chapter 4 is a great chapter. It's speaking about rest and it compares it to the seventh day when it says in verse 4, God rested on the seventh day. It was God who did all the work and Adam entered into God's rest.

That's teaching us that it's only God who can bring us into this rest of perfect love where I love God with all my heart and there is zero love for money in my conscious area. But then something happens. I often compare our flesh to an onion and something happens and I discover, hey, I love money there a little bit.

I want to peel it off. Anyhow, I got rid of that. I finished with it.

I remember once when it was a long ago, I'm not in any financial use today, but long ago there was a time when I was in some need and I, of course, I wouldn't tell anybody my need and somehow I received some money and God said, the Lord asked me, are you happy that you got something? Has the joy increased in your heart? It was a searching question. I'm supposed to rejoice in the Lord alone, always. I said, Lord, I'm sorry.

Yes, the joy has increased, but I don't want it to be like this. I want to rejoice in the Lord whether I have my needs met or not met. If they're not met, we'll just learn to live a little more simply and cut down even on our eating, but I'm not going to find my joy in money.

So there was one layer of that onion I saw that day and I said, Lord, I'm not going to find any joy in having got some, even my needs met. No, I'm going to be at rest in this area. But do you think that eliminated the love of money for me completely? No, it's an onion.

I'll reach the center of it when Christ comes and I'll be 100% free. It's the same way with purity. We can stop lusting after women.

We can stop having dirty thoughts, dirty dreams, wonderful. Layer after layer of the onions are peeled off. We men have tremendous problem in this area of sexual lust and they're all the same.

If you're a normal human being, you have a sexual desire from the age of 13, 14 onwards and we battle it, battle it. And even after you're married, it's there and we can be tempted by pretty women and gradually we overcome that and then we admire them. And so, you know, if you do that too much, it can tempt you.

But Proverbs says, be careful that you don't lust after a woman's beauty. If you're not interested in her body, you don't want to touch her, but to desire a person's beauty. To even, to ever wish that your wife were as beautiful as X, Y, or Z. That's a terrible sin.

For you, your wife must be the most beautiful in your eyes. Anything other than that is sin. It is sin.

You know, the Lord told Ezekiel when he took away his wife, he told Ezekiel, I'm taking away the desire of your eyes from you. I don't have time to show you that verse. Look it up in Exodus 22 or 23 or 24.

I'll take away the desire of your eyes from you. A wonderful prophet, the desire of his eyes was his wife. That's wonderful.

When you love God with all your heart, you're pure in this area of lust. You're pure in the sense that you desire only your wife. You don't want to look at another person's beauty.

I'm just trying to show you how there could be very subtle areas of unrest that is fear. And there's a promise given to us that the whole land of Canaan can be ours. We come short of it.

Why? Because we relax that we have conquered so much. And because we hear so many challenging messages in NCCF, you probably conquered more areas of the land of Canaan than some other believers you know. And that's the thing that can make you relax.

That guy has conquered only 30, 20% and I've conquered 25% or 30%. Am I going to compare myself with him? There's only one person I've got to compare myself. Looking unto Jesus means I only compare myself with Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12, it says, let us run the race looking only unto Jesus. He's my, the author and finisher of my faith. He was tempted in every point and did not sin.

He's the only author I have of my faith. He's the only finisher I have of my faith. And if I ever compare myself with other believers around me compared to whom I may be better, I, in the category mentioned in second Corinthians and chapter 10, my translation of this is second Corinthians 10, verse 12, the last part, those who compare themselves with themselves are spiritual idiots.

Without understanding, they're spiritual idiots. If I compare myself with another and say, hey, I'm better than him, I'm a spiritual idiot. That's what the Pharisee did.

Lord, I thank you that I'm not like these other guys and especially that guy over there. It's very easy in churches that preach holiness, all churches, including ours, it's very easy to have this attitude sometimes without even knowing it comes up in us. Lord, I thank you.

I'm not like those in that denomination or those in that denomination. We've got the whole truth. Well, I hope we have.

I don't know. There could be even areas of truth that I still need to see more clearly. We can see it in my conscious area.

I'm conscious of nothing against myself. That's the best we can say, but there could be giants out there that I haven't seen even the area of doctrine. I don't want to boast unnecessarily.

So long as we are conscious, living in our conscious light, I'm walking in the light, and I have fellowship with God, and God will keep on increasing the area of light as we keep faithful in the area God gives us. The light will increase. Like it says in Proverbs 4, and verse 12, as you go step by step, the way will open up before you, or Psalm 119, 105, where it says, your word is a lamp to my feet, or I'd say a torchlight in today's language.

God's word is a torchlight. The light God gives me in my heart is a torchlight, and torchlight shows me my steps immediately in front of me, and I'll never see the steps, the land in the distance until I move forward, but when I move forward with this torchlight, I see a little more, and I move forward a little more with the torchlight, I see a little more. That's how God increases the conscious area of our life, where I see more and more and more and more, and there's more and more areas where I have to come to rest.

So I want to be in a perpetual progression in my spiritual life where the rest is increasing. There's a whole land of Canaan to be occupied. Let us fear, lest there is this promise of occupying the whole land, and I'm satisfied we just got a little bit.

I want to enter into his rest, and it's by faith. It says here, those who believe enter into rest. The one who has entered into the rest, verse 10, has seized from his own works, and verse 3, when we enter into rest, we believe that God wants us to live a life of rest at all times, and it's to enter into this rest that God gives us light, and verse 12 is also in this connection.

Verse 11 says, let us be diligent, verse 11, to enter into Hebrews 4, 11, to enter that rest so that no one will fall or fail through disobedience, and then it says, because the word of God is the one that penetrates between soul and spirit in my life. See, in the Old Testament, God's word only showed us on the outside. They had zero understanding of the spirit, the understanding of body and soul.

That was all there was in the Old Testament, and a lot of Christians today also think of man as body and soul. They are old covenant, but when we come to the new covenant, you read 1 Thessalonians 5, 23, man is body, soul, and spirit, and spirit comes first, but they didn't have an understanding in the old covenant, but the word of God comes and shows us there is something beyond soul and spirit. It's the most holy place which is closed in the old covenant days.

The tabernacle is a picture of body, soul, and spirit, the three parts of the tabernacle, and that spirit part was closed off with the veil, but that veil has been rent now. We can enter into life in the spirit. Jesus told the Samaritan woman, people need to worship in the spirit.

Worship in the spirit is also something that many people don't know. Most people worship in the soul, which is emotion and excitement, and with the body, it's all good. I worship in my hands and raising hands and in the soul with feeling, but beyond that in spirit.

In spirit is to be like Abraham offering up, Isaac offering up your best to God in the secret place only between you and God. Nobody knows about the secret sacrifices you make to God. Like Abraham told the servants, I'm going up to Mount Moriah alone.

I'm going to make us, I'm going to worship God there. None of you are going to see it. True worship is like that.

Other people can't see the true worshiper is alone in the most holy place with God, and he fellowships with other people who are also alone in the most holy place with God, and he's wonderful fellowship with them. That is the place of rest. So the word of God comes to divide between soul and spirit and shows me, judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart, which they just didn't have under the old covenant.

So when we talk about the new covenant that we've come into, think of this area where the Holy Spirit uses God's word to divide between soul and spirit to show me the thoughts and intents of the heart, which I didn't have any light on. And the word of God is constantly coming every day. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And every word that proceeds from the mouth of God is like a sword that shows me a little more of what is soulish and cleanse it out. Not only cleansing what is of the flesh that's easier to see, but what is soulish, what is human, and a human way of reacting as opposed to a divine way of reacting. The Holy Spirit shows us that.

It's one of the wonderful privileges. Dear brothers, I hope you're getting some light on that in your daily life. God is showing you beyond the areas of flesh, beyond the soldiers of Egypt who have been killed, to soul and spirit in the land of Canaan.

This is an area where I don't believe I can explain to you, only the Holy Spirit can make it clear. You know, like even to Paul's closest co-worker, Timothy, I'll close with this. In 2nd Timothy, Paul told Timothy that, think about what I have said.

And in 2nd Timothy 2, verse 7, consider what I say. The Lord will give you understanding. Timothy, Paul says, I can explain it to you.

That won't help. The word of God is to come like a sharp sword and give you understanding in your spirit, which I cannot explain. See, explanation is in the realm of the soul.

A lot of times we sit in the meetings and we hear a brother who's very gifted in teaching and with a clear mind, and you've got a clear mind and intellect to intellect, you grasp something. Ah, you say, I got it. I understood the new covenant.

You haven't. You understood it in your soul. Let the whole word of God come to show you the division between soul and spirit.

Consider. I say the same thing. Consider what I say.

And the Lord will give you understanding. Take that humble place, dear brothers, that Lord, I've heard something. I've got it in my mind.

Now, Lord, give me understanding in my spirit. I want to get into the holy place and experience this, this rest is not something to be understood. It's something to be experienced.

And only the Holy Spirit can do that. I hope I have produced enough confusion in your mind so that you will see God now. That's the ultimate purpose.

No man is supposed to be able to explain the whole truth to us. No. Jesus said, he is the truth.

He is the life. And I can get the truth only as I get him. The rest is intellectual understanding in the soul.

To enter into rest and enter to life in the spirit. The Holy Spirit alone can bring you there. And I pray that you will seek him.

God is a jealous God. James 4.7 says he jealously desires our spirit. He wants to be able to communicate with our spirit in a way that no man, no teacher can explain to you.

So I leave it there. I pray that the Holy Spirit will take his word and divide between soul and spirit and lead you into the most holy place and explain to you what this rest in God is. What it means to love God, the Holy Spirit, filling your heart with love.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I tried my best, Lord, but I'm absolutely conscious that I cannot give anyone light in this area. I know what the light you gave me, which nobody could explain, but you taught me.

And I pray that you will teach every one of these dear brothers. I believe they're sincere, wanting your best. Let no one be deceived.

Let no one be deceived having occupied 10% of Canaan and sitting back and thinking they got it all. Help us to press on. Like your servant Paul said, I'm not yet attained.

I'm not yet become perfect, but I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We want to all do that. Thank you, Father, in Jesus name.

Amen.

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